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ABSTRACT

Produced as part of a collaborative research project in which classroom teachers teamed with university-based research assistants to explore questions raised by the teachers in the course of their work with students, this monograph deals with the issue of "occasion." Following a review of theory and research about aspects of occasion that seem to affect student performance, the second section of the monograph describes a particular writing experience that produced outstanding writing and offers insights into reasons for the assignment's success. It also offers writing samples produced by students at different levels of ability and motivation. The third section of the monograph reports on a research project undertaken to discover whether performance on a writing test could be improved by specifying the audience and how a test occasion might be affected by different audience conditions. The fourth section compares the test writing that students did for the research project with the writing they had completed for their English class during the year. It also looks at the question of how a "sense of occasion" might influence performance and how teachers might best create good writing occasions. Appendixes include samples of student writing, three versions of a writing topic, and sample test papers showing holistic scores and analytic ratings. (HOD)

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THE WRITE OCCASION

By

Patrick Woodworth
Teacher of English
Tomales High School
Tomales, California

and

Catharine Keech
Research Assistant
Bay Area Writing Project

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Preface

Why do some assignments work better than others? Why is it that with one assignment the students' writing is honest, evocative, lively, fluent, and relatively error free--while another assignment (equally well thought out, as carefully prepared and presented as the first) results in drab, voiceless, pompous prose full of flaws we haven't seen since the beginning of the semester? Why is it so difficult to come up consistently with the right occasions? When students do write badly, is it because of what they don't know about writing, or is it because we don't always know how to get their best writing out of them?

Pat Woodworth, a teacher at Tomales High School in California and a Bay Area Writing Project teacher/consultant, came up with an assignment one year that had *all* of his students writing enthusiastically and had most students writing beyond what had seemed to be their usual level of performance. Pat began to ask himself some questions about this particular assignment. Was it unique and a one-time-only piece of good luck, or were there features of the assignment that could be repeated thereafter? In this monograph, following a review of theory and research about aspects of occasion which seem to affect student performance, Pat describes this "occasion that worked." He shares his insights about why this particular writing experience seems to produce outstanding writing and includes samples of writing from students at different levels of ability and motivation.

Part Three reports a research study undertaken by Pat Woodworth and Catharine Keech, BAWP research assistant, in an

attempt to discover whether performance on a writing *test* can be improved by specifying audience. It asks how a test occasion might be affected by different audience conditions. The writing task for the test, however, resembles the classroom assignment in several ways: it asks students to write from their own experience, it allows them to speak with authority and to assume some real interest on the part of the reader.

Part Four compares the test-writing students did for the research study with the writing done for their English class during the year, and looks again at the question of how a "sense of occasion" might influence performance and how teachers might best create good writing occasions.

This monograph is the first of a series of collaborative research studies to be published by the Bay Area Writing Project, a series which teams a classroom teacher with a university-based research assistant to explore a question raised by the teacher in the course of his or her work with students.

James Gray, Director
Bay Area Writing Project
School of Education
University of California, Berkeley

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I.

What Makes the Difference: A Research and Teaching Question

A growing number of teachers and researchers in composition believe that students write better and learn to write more eagerly when classroom assignments and writing tests are made to resemble real opportunities to communicate rather than being mere academic exercises. There is some evidence that writing for real audiences (i.e., in a context where there are actual consequences of communication) may result in better writing, at least for some students. It is not clear, however, that this is always the case, or why it is sometimes the case. We are only beginning to learn about the complex factors that may affect writing performance. In the search for occasions which might enhance performance, teachers, writers, and researchers have suggested several conditions for good writing.

AUDIENCE AWARENESS

There are different characteristics of superior writing that are taken to indicate a writer's audience awareness: for example, clear and adequate information (Kroll, 1978; Piaget, 1955); choosing an appropriate level of vocabulary or syntax for the particular audience one expects to address (Crowhurst, 1979); shaping and planning discourse to fit the interests of the reader (Flower, 1977); editing for greater readability (Hirsch, 1977); making no references to information the reader is not privy to (Higgins, 1978).

At least two distinct kinds of audience awareness seem called for to explain these characteristics of good writing. The first requires writers to distinguish between themselves and other people. The second requires writers to distinguish among *different kinds* of others.

The more basic distinction, between self and other, seems to be missing from the writing of young or inexperienced writers. Moffett (1968) describes this lack when he says that the majority of communication problems arise from "the writer's assumption that the reader thinks and feels as he does, has had the same experience, and hears in his head, when he is reading, the same voice the writer does when he is writing" (p. 195).

This basic lack of audience awareness, a kind of self-centeredness or a failure to adopt the perspective of a general reader at some point in the composing process, affects the prose even of experienced adult writers. Flower (1979) suggests that "writer-based" prose which lacks this kind of audience awareness in varying degrees may be a useful stage on the way to producing "reader-based" prose. We may need to write for ourselves to assemble our ideas and information, and then move on to imagining how our prose will be understood by a reader. Flower has developed methods of teaching adult writers the strategy of taking the reader's perspective while revising their work.

A second, more sophisticated kind of audience awareness is the ability to distinguish among different kinds of audiences. This kind of distinction has been the interest of rhetoricians from Plato to the present. Winterowd (1975) asserts that the "whole point of rhetoric is adjusting discourse to audience" (p. 264). McCrimmon (1976) says, "A writer must think of his reader long before he begins to write" (p. 15). Taking the particular characteristics of an audience into consideration during the planning and shaping of a written piece is a strategy Flower finds among good writers--a strategy not shared by poorer or less experienced writers. Crowhurst (1979) finds that younger writers (up to the last years of high school) don't seem

to write differently for audiences of different ages, but older writers do.

Who, then, is most helped by writing tasks which specify audience? Experienced writers report that knowing something about their readers makes writing easier. They feel they must make decisions based on information about their audience. When no information is provided, the writing task is more difficult. But less experienced writers may not perceive these critical choices at all. Instead they may be writing for an imaginary audience whose tastes are those of teachers or parents who have responded to their writing--or perhaps just of themselves as readers, if they *are* readers. The introduction of a demand to write for a particular kind of audience might make their task more difficult.

Nonetheless, both kinds of audience awareness represent increases in power and control for a writer. Should we therefore design test topics or teaching assignments which encourage audience awareness by specifying particular audiences? Marjorie Kirrie (1979), chief reader for Educational Testing Service's college entrance examination, suggests that in many testing situations, specifying audience may actually lead to less effective writing. Consider two occasions on which audience awareness of a sort can be blamed for producing undesirable qualities in writing:

- A well-meaning test-maker specifies that students should write their thoughts about a favorite book, but write for a best friend rather than a teacher. The language produced by the students is colloquial, the style informal, the content rather skimpy, with generalizations and superlatives taking the place of specific references such as the students might make if they followed their teacher's rules for a good literary essay. The results are almost unratable by any standard--how much do we know about the taste of these writers' peers, and how they might rate the letters? And the teachers who score these essays are put off by this glimpse of how adolescents might talk to one another. In this instance, the specified audience is incompatible with the test occasion.

- An evaluator wants to know how well students can write for the adult, generally educated reader. He specifies no audience but calls for an essay about a book which asks for good form and supporting examples. The essays he receives are more complex syntactically than those for the test-maker above, but they are also beset with dull, clotted prose: over-use of the passive voice, excessive nominalizing of verb forms, confusion about agents of action, the most glaring sentence and referencing faults, and a total absence of voice. Students are aware that their audience is adult and academic, and they try to write accordingly with disastrous results.

Teachers and test-makers shake their heads and wonder what happened to the direct, vivid, fluent writing that the class somehow produced on one assignment last month. Clearly the simple rule "audience should be specified" is not adequate to guarantee a good writing occasion. And the catchword "audience awareness" cannot explain all good writing. We need to know more about how a sense of audience interacts with other aspects of the writing occasion.

RHETORICAL CONTEXT

If students seem to write better for real audiences, perhaps the key factor is not *audience* but *realness*. In other words, it may matter less to student writers *who* the audience is--be it teacher, parent, peer--than *what* the rhetorical occasion is. Are students writing for real reasons--to communicate ideas that they want a reader to know about? Or are they writing because a teacher assigned a bit of work so that he could judge their ability to write? Emig (1971) and others have reported students' preference for self-initiated tasks. Researchers such as Gumperz (1978) have reported that some students who will not or cannot write in the classroom are able and ready to learn if they encounter real life contexts where writing becomes necessary to attain ends they believe in. Gumperz goes so far as to define most classroom tasks as "decontextualized" performance--that is, having no context, or no "natural" context.

In a sense, as James Britton points out, all writing is decontextualized. Writers are communicating with distant listeners and have none of the context clues offered in a conversational setting. But some writing, which he calls "expressive," is closer to ordinary speech, and is possible when a writer is talking on paper to a trusted other. The teacher can play this role, allowing a child to write *to communicate* rather than *to perform*. As the teacher increasingly assumes the role of judge, the writing process must become increasingly decontextualized.

It is perhaps wiser to speak of school as a special context rather than as no context. But the phrase "decontextualized performance" alerts us to a real problem by implying an alienation not only from the normal contexts of language use but from the very purpose of language. School writing is rarely read as communication; rather it is judged as potential communication. Although the performance may be rewarded with a grade or credit, it does not function as language is meant to. The student may never know if her reader was entertained. She can be almost certain that her teacher/judge did not learn anything new or surprising. The writing appears to have no consequences as a piece of communication.

In *Writing and Learning Across the Curriculum*, Nancy Martin et. al. describe how teachers in all disciplines can make the classroom a "real rhetorical context" by introducing a kind of honest dialogue in writing between student and teacher. In addition, Moffett's *Interaction* series and the *Foxfire* books provide or simulate real contexts for classroom writing. Student publications--newspapers, yearbooks--are real contexts, and teachers like Bruce Reeves (1979) with his assault on advertising and bureaucratic language have found real contexts and meaningful purposes for student writing, even though it is still assigned writing.

But not all writing must be in the service of real world transactions. For the kind of writing Kinneavy (1971) calls

"literary discourse," the audience is general, the demands of a specific rhetorical context remote. The writer is concerned with creating a work of art. He is in fact performing, and his context may be only the world of the work he is creating. Further, when it is finished, it will be judged for its aesthetic merits, not only for the information or ideas it communicates. It is possible that audience and rhetorical context should be specified when a writing assignment demands that the writer simulate a real world transaction like informing or persuading. When, instead, he is writing academic exposition, as in literary criticism, or is creating a story or poem, the special context provided by a school assignment with a teacher/judge at the end of the process may not be so very different from the natural context in which this kind of writing usually occurs.

Finally, does any simulation of natural context affect the *test* situation? Can a student pretend to be engaged in ordinary communication while knowing that the writing is destined for judgment and rating? Which context has the greater effect: the terms of the assignment or the reality of the test occasion? Do either the pretended audience and rhetorical context or the test situation really explain much about how students perform on a given test? We can't begin to find out what the operant conditions really are until we go beyond terms like "audience awareness" and "rhetorical context." What is it about a real rhetorical context that seems to enable some students to perform better? Why is it that on some test occasions, writing only for judges, some students or even whole classes nonetheless outperform themselves?

INTENTION

When the "realness" of an audience or a context plays a part in generating good writing, it may be because students find it easier to write with intention in a setting where their writing is likely to have consequences for others, not just for themselves as students.

William Brandt, Chair of the Department of Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, distinguishes between, on the one hand, highly *motivated* writing, where rewards like grades or money increase the desire to write well while contributing little to the process except anxiety, and, on the other hand, highly *intentional* writing, where the writing arises out of a drive to communicate, to have an effect, rather than to earn an extrinsic reward. People write with intention not as a result of wanting to produce writing but as a result of having something to say.

Brandt believes that intentional writing is easier than merely motivated writing. Only highly skilled writers, he argues, can produce good writing in response to others' intentions--that is a job for professional ghost writers, not students.* In addition, as Moffett (1968) and Shaughnessey (1978) have both observed, writing out of one's own intentions appears to enhance the performance of even the poorest writers.

An experiment by Slobin and Welsh (1971) tends to support the notion that the intent to communicate releases abilities which motivation leaves untapped. Using a technique called "elicited imitation," Slobin and Welsh tested young children's ability to repeat grammatical structures of varying complexity. One young subject was so highly motivated and generally cooperative they named her "Echo." But even Echo had limits beyond which she could not seem to go in the experimental situation. Nonetheless, when the researchers observed Echo in her natural surroundings, they found she produced grammatical structures more difficult than those she could imitate. They concluded that the intention to communicate plays an active role in determining language performance.

If this is generally true, the writing occasion must somehow stimulate intentional communication if we want students to perform at their maximum capacity. Taken on the whole, the

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*Informal address to the Bay Area Writing Project Summer Institute, July, 1977.

evidence seems to suggest that real life contexts stimulate intention to communicate more readily than school contexts.

While this may be true in practice, we know that school as a context for writing is not *necessarily* defeating. Often enough an assignment to perform comes along which awakens intention, so that, in spite of the fact that the reader is a judge, the writer pours out an essay or story for anyone out there, simply because she feels something that clamors to be said. Intention arises for these students out of their own desire to invent a tale, to entertain, simply to be "writers." Our job as testers or evaluators of writing ability would be hopeless if this were not the case.

MOTIVATION

Although concern with how he might be judged, how we might be rewarded or penalized, might not be enough to make a person write well if he has nothing to say, there is no doubt that intention, or having something to say, may also be insufficient to make him write. Motivation--the prospect of reward, appreciation, whatever--plays a complex and important role in the performance of any task. It may well be that what makes the *Freshman Handbook* assignment described in the following pages successful is not merely the presence of an audience or the fact that students are writing with authority about their own experience, but also the excitement engendered by this "different" assignment. There is a *sense of occasion* when one moves from rehearsing to performing for an audience--even when the audience is made up of judges, not peers. Athletes and actors know that, although they must manage to forget their audience at the critical moment and concentrate entirely on what they are doing, the mere fact of an audience, of an occasion, creates an anticipatory elation which may carry them beyond their usual performance. Some children feel this elation when they are taking tests; others are crippled by the anxiety. The difference seems to come from confidence in one's ability to perform on

demand. In writing this confidence manifests itself in the child's belief that he will discover he has something to say and so can write with intention, no matter what the task. The test occasion then becomes simply a special chance to do his best.

In behavioral research, the tendency to perform at a higher rate of efficiency in response to changes in environment or a "sense of occasion" has come to be called the "Hawthorne effect" after studies by Harvard University researchers at the Hawthorne plant in Chicago (Mouly, 1963). Evaluators are often concerned that the Hawthorne effect will improve performance for students who are aware that they are being given special treatment, with the results that elevated scores might lead to false assumptions about the new program being evaluated. Others would argue that the secret of good teaching is to create a series of "Hawthorne effects." Rather than trying to maintain a constant level of performance, teachers should periodically introduce a special occasion when students feel themselves observed or evaluated in a new way.

In the research study undertaken here, students writing for no specified audience, for an imaginary audience, or for a real audience were all participating equally in a special occasion, writing for external judges as a part of a research study at the University. This factor, which is inherent in the experimental approach, may do more to account for performance level across all groups than any differences in writing tasks could account for.

Teachers or researchers may, in further observation of many different writing situations, discover what kinds of students benefit from writing in real rhetorical contexts for real audiences (or in simulated contexts), and what enables other students to perform well in the "unnatural" context of school writing. But it is more than likely that the solution to designing the best writing occasions cannot be reduced simply to designating an audience and a purpose.

II.

The Freshman Handbook: A Classroom Project

Patrick Woodworth

For the past six years in the small rural high school where I teach, sophomore English classes have begun the year with a project we call *The Freshman Handbook*. It is a sequence of activities and assignments designed to help the students to consider their roles as students by encouraging them to reflect on their previous school year and then to make statements in a variety of forms about their reflections. The final product of this three to five week unit is a number of handbooks written and designed in small groups to be given to entering ninth graders for their use, enjoyment, and response.

In developing the sequence of assignments for this unit, I have attempted to synthesize the best of what I have learned from using Moffett's *Interaction* materials with the techniques and attitudes I have absorbed during the four years of my work with teacher/consultants in the Bay Area Writing Project. Originally I conceived the project as a preparation for students who had never used Moffett's *Interaction* assignments. I wanted students to learn how to do focused, disciplined work in small groups. The opportunity to write for a real audience helped impose a certain seriousness on this endeavor that carried over into their small group work all year.

The project has become a tradition. Once the ninth grade students read the handbooks composed for them, they look forward to the time when they, as sophomores, will be able to create their handbooks for the naive ninth graders. They

realize that they will be able to recount their own experiences for an audience other than the teacher. They know that their readers will respond and will benefit from their writing. For these reasons the project has an authenticity about it that most other assignments lack. Moreover, during their work on the project, students form personal relationships both through thinking, talking, and writing about the task (small group and class processes) and through talking and writing brought about by the accomplishment of the task (interchanges between tenth and ninth grade classes).

From almost the first year onward, I noticed that the writing produced during this period was out of the ordinary for most students. I often found it hard to stimulate such eager and successful performance again during the remainder of the school year. Not only were students willing to revise and edit their writing, but even early drafts were longer, richer in detail and voice than any other classroom writing. Clearly this was an inspiring writing occasion.

What follows is a description of the series of assignments, much as I present them to teachers in Bay Area Writing Project in-service programs. Appendix A provides examples of student creations from almost every stage of the handbook project.

CONTEXT

Most of the 250 students of Tomales High School, situated in northern Marin County, come from families engaged in farming and fishing. A few come from professional families. Ten to twenty percent go on to college; the rest return to family businesses or go on to secretarial schools and into skilled labor of various kinds. The entering ninth graders will stay with one of the two English teachers for two years before they enter the junior-senior elective program. During that time they are heterogeneously grouped, with the exception of those reading several years below grade level, who are enrolled in special reading classes. Our English department capitalizes on the

diversity of language abilities and attitudes by having students work in pairs and small groups. Classes are small enough (15-25) so that such work can be managed productively by one instructor. Since students may live as much as fifty miles from one another, the school is a primary social environment in the community. The students are quite willing to work in small groups. The teacher's task is to provide a focus which will sufficiently distract them from their need to talk with friends about what happened last night, a focus or problem of sufficient intensity to engage their thoughts and energies and enable them to practice and develop their language skills. Since the *Freshman Handbook* asks that each person observe his social environment, everyone has equal access to and interest in the "subject matter" of the problem. Even the student who does not like school has an opportunity to express that point of view.

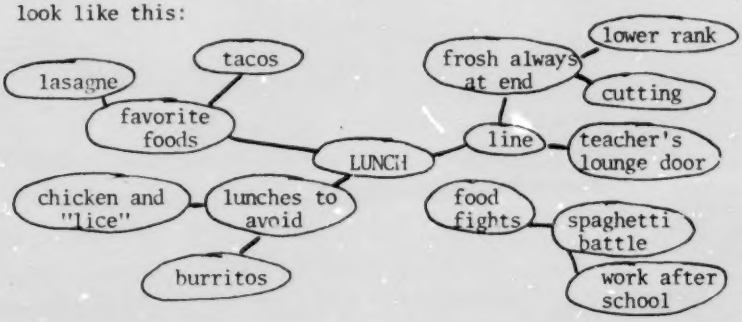
SEQUENCE: LETTER TO A FRESHMAN

Pre-Write

Sophomores begin the year by reflecting on their previous year--first as a class, then individually. While someone takes notes on a large piece of butcher paper tacked to the wall (these notes are preserved and seen by other sophomore classes), I ask them to list events, classes, people, scenes that are memorable. As responses range from things everyone remembers to those recalled by one person only, the resulting list reflects both collective and individual memories. Questions are raised about the accuracy of memory and about differences in how people experience their ninth grade year. A variety of attitudes surfaces so that the crucial question of point of view arises in a natural way. I do not insist on it, but point to the variety both within the individual class and, later, when all three class lists are on display, among the different sophomore classes. To stimulate reluctant memories, I may conduct a guided memory "tour" of the year from June back to September, pointing out

certain events which held attention for a time.

Working alone, each student makes a personal list, using what he can from the work on display and adding anything new he may think of or may not have wished to share with the whole group. At this point it is helpful to introduce "clustering" as a way of exploring a generalized memory in greater detail. Several clusters of details or events around significant memories can form the nuclei for a like number of paragraphs in the first writing assignment--the letter to a ninth grader. It is usually sufficient to demonstrate clustering once at the chalkboard for students to see its value as a way of elaborating an idea. For instance, a student may want to tell the freshman about his experience with school lunches. His cluster might look like this:



The paragraph which evolves from this cluster might begin:

> While standing in the lunch line you will inevitably taste the teacher's lounge door. I ate it quite a few times last year: an excellent appetizer before a school lunch. As a freshman you're sure to notice how the line grows longer in front of you and shorter in back. Since the door is at the end of the line you'll meet that tasty door again and again. Because of your lower rank you can't cut. Upperclassmen don't cut; they "place" themselves in front of you.

It might go on to describe food fights, good and bad lunches, and other aspects of school lunch which the student recalls as he writes. The cluster does not restrict the scope of elaboration; it gives the student a "center" around which the paragraph

may coalesce.*

When each student has recorded a number of memories, we have a class discussion of the dominant attitude(s) in their lists and clusters. Is there a prevailing emotion or mood? How, I ask them, do you feel about your memories of last year? It is this dominant tone around which I ask them to organize their letters. Which incidents they choose to relate will depend on the mood they want to convey.

Write

Each student writes a letter to a particular ninth grader telling him or her what to expect of the ninth grade year. Although this assignment is merely a preliminary step and will not actually be delivered, each writer is instructed to address his letter to a specific student, either someone known to the writer or a name drawn from the ninth grade roster. The letter writers are urged to illustrate their assertions or judgments with examples and specific incidents from their experiences as ninth graders and to maintain a consistent tone throughout. Teams of two students edit the rough drafts, focusing on the need for additional examples, for specificity and concreteness and pointing out lapses in consistency of tone.

Post-Write

The revised letters are shared with other members of the class. Listeners identify tone, comment on the point of view, and discuss the impressions a ninth grader might get from reading the letter.

Grouping

Now that each student has chosen and revealed a particular

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*I am indebted to Gabriele Rico of San Jose State University for this technique.

stance from which he will describe his ninth grade year, I ask those who share a common attitude to form a group. (There will be four to six groups in a class.) I try to generate a sense of collaboration, particularly among those students who are "outsiders" or who usually don't participate in class activities. The new groups will each produce a handbook, with up to eighteen books created by the entire sophomore class to be distributed among the ninth graders.

The groups know that they are to make informative and entertaining booklets to serve as guides for the perplexed ninth graders. At this point the students recall the handbooks read the previous year, and although I do not bring out last year's handbooks to serve as models, many remember them well enough to want to create more forceful and effective booklets.

Focusing the Group

In the course of grouping themselves, students have read a good portion of the class letters. By the time they have chosen their groups they know the attitudes they share. At this point I ask them to decide on a "frame" that reflects the tone of their letters and leads naturally to a concept or form for the handbook. Last year I gave them a list of suggestions:

1. Tomales High School is a new colony on another planet. Freshmen have just landed. You observe their behavior.

2. You are an explorer meeting this unique culture for the first time. You describe it to the settlers who will follow.

3. THS is enemy territory. You are a spy who must report back to control (freshman).

4. You are an inspector of schools reporting to your superiors on the quality of life at THS.

5. THS is a disaster area. You have to determine whether it qualifies for relief.

6. You are on assignment from a TV studio to make

a documentary on THS.

7. You are an interviewer trying to catch the essence of life at THS through students' talk. Bring pictures and interview statements together in interesting and unusual ways.

8. You want to help freshmen survive their first year at THS. Tell them how to get good grades, enjoy themselves, participate in activities, avoid trouble, etc.

9. THS is a place of great evil and destruction. You must prepare a manual on how to avoid the terrors and dangers of THS for all those who might enter.

10. THS is a model high school. You must prepare a report for principals and teachers everywhere on how to make a perfect high school.

11. You are a systems analyst whose assignment is to report on THS efficiency. Where is effort wasted? Where is it applied well?

Although all but one, two, eight and nine were ignored, students could see the kind of unity I was aiming for, and, as a result, the handbooks were more integrated than they had been in the past when I left selection of point of view up to them.

The adoption of a group frame or theme injects new energy into the project just when students are wondering whether what they have to say is all that interesting after all. The school is small, experience not that varied. And they have been immersed in their memories to the extent that everything seems all too familiar. It becomes apparent to them that their frame is central in this communication to the ninth grade, and they begin to ask how much exaggeration is allowed. I remind them that their purpose is to be both informative and entertaining and that their work actually will be read by ninth graders whose imaginations they must capture.

SEQUENCE OF WRITINGS FOR HANDBOOK

In the course of designing and composing the handbooks, every student completes four writing assignments:

1. Description of behavior in or around school
2. Recording of a conversation in or around school
3. Interview of another student
4. Observation of an adult who works at the school

Students need not write these with the group point of view in mind. If they choose not to, they may revise the pieces later for inclusion in the handbook. Only those that fit will be included. Others I simply credit students for having completed. Students are thus allowed to use their editorial judgment, and they learn selection: not everything they write need appear in the published handbook.

I suggest other writings that might be included:

1. "That was then, this is now." Poetry or prose showing how things have changed.
2. Useful data. Tricks, short cuts, how-to, inside tips, etc.
3. A-Z in Tomales High. Less imaginative students like this alphabetization of experience. Some have organized an entire handbook this way.
4. Real or imaginary notes passed in class.
5. Stories, poems, fantasies.

As often as possible we begin class with a short writing exercise designed to get the class as a whole thinking about the handbook project before they begin working in groups or writing on their own. The exercises are designed to increase awareness of point of view or to induce a fresh perspective on what might be done with the materials at hand.

1. I show topical photos from Arthur Tress's *Dream Collector*, a book of children's dreams translated into photographs. Students write from the point of view of the child in the picture (for instance, a boy in a dunce cap).

2. We rewrite news articles taken from local newspapers from various points of view.

3. We make lists of everything the school is not.

4. If the school were destroyed suddenly (we're directly over the San Andreas fault) and we were asked to design a commemorative plaque, how would it look?

5. We draw a picture of the student "body" on a large piece of butcher paper and label its parts. Just what or who is the brain? the armpit? the navel?

6. We walk away from the school and observe it from a distance during class. What's going on in there right now? How much do we know? What do we imagine?

Editing, Proofreading

Do all the pieces a group wants to use in its handbook reflect the chosen frame or point of view? This question provides a focus for small group evaluation and subsequent revision of the complete book. In this sense each group member is an editor responsible for the overall character of the handbook. With my help or on their own they make suggestions for revision or decide not to include a piece. If it is to be included, it receives a particularly close proofreading before being drafted in final form. Other work is kept in individual folders.

Handbook Format

Each student is given these instructions:

In preparing the *Freshman Handbook* you will take a look at your environment from a fresh (naturally) point of view. Having just completed your first year, you have an intimate knowledge of your audience and what it takes to inform, entertain and persuade them. The choices you make in writing and laying out the book should reflect your experience of last year and your understanding of what it is to be a ninth grader in Tomales High School.

Each handbook must have:

1. a cover with legible title and attractive design suggestive of contents
2. a table of contents
3. writing from each member of the group
4. consideration of page layout
5. space for feedback at end with specific questions:

   Was this book helpful?
   What do you expect from your freshman year based on this book?
   What grade would you assign this book?
   What parts did you enjoy?

6. title page with credits: editors, writers, correspondents, artwork
7. a definite point of view sustained throughout

For this paper, the work is done on 8-1/2 x 11 inch construction paper. I encourage the use of photos, cartoons, drawings, comics, graffiti, jokes, captions and marginalia as ways of unifying and reinforcing point of view, creating continuity, and counterpointing or complementing text. A natural division of labor usually occurs, as those more visually oriented take charge of layout and design, while those with greater verbal facility devote their efforts to preparing text.

Since the finished handbooks integrate writing, drawing, photography, and marginalia, each is a unique production with a character all its own. Only color reproductions of pages could convey this variety of presentation. Samples of student writing contained in the handbooks can be found in the appendix, but readers must remember that those writings are but one aspect of the total composition. And, for that matter, the total composition is but the "artifact" of the process of talk and decision, expression and selection, composition and editing that is the *Freshman Handbook*.

III.

The Test Occasion: An Experimental Study

Catharine Keech

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study addresses the problem of how to make the test situation more like a real opportunity for communication rather than simply performance for a judge. Can this be done, and will it result in better writing? The research hypotheses are: 1) that performance on a writing test will be generally better if students are writing to a specified audience with a specified purpose; 2) that performance will be better if the specified audience is real rather than imaginary.

To test these hypotheses a writing task was chosen which could be adapted to three audience conditions:

1. No audience specified. ("Describe...")
2. Imaginary audience specified. ("Imagine you are writing for...")
3. Real audience specified. ("Choose someone you know who...")

The task chosen asked students to write about the "first time" they experienced something which may later have become ordinary, or may never have been repeated, but was special when experienced for the first time. The task was intended to share two important characteristics with the classroom task--creating a *Freshman Handbook:*

a. The students would be writing with the authority of knowing something the reader does not know.

b. The specified audience in Conditions Two and

> Three was described as someone who has reason to be interested in the information being offered, someone who has not yet had, but may soon have, a similar experience.

The task also seemed suitable for the kind of personal essay usually written only for the teacher as judge (Condition One).

While wide research is needed to challenge or establish the truth of the notion that performance in context is better than decontextualized performance in eliciting students' best writing, this small scale study seemed a feasible way to test the generally accepted idea that performance on writing tests can be improved by specifying audience and purpose--in other words, by supplying a full rhetorical context, whether real or imaginary.

Besides scoring the essays holistically, we did several analyses of the papers in an attempt to identify particular characteristics of the three groups of responses. Moreover, all papers were examined for indications that the student was writing for a particular kind of audience.

METHOD

Pat Woodworth's English classes at Tomales High were used for the experiment--a total of six classes, three ninth grade English classes (with several low ability sophomores enrolled) and three mixed junior/senior classes, for a total of eighty-two student participants.

Within each class period, students were randomly assigned to the three conditions. The teacher led a pre-writing discussion on "some first times I remember" to be sure that all students had an equal opportunity to understand the writing task and think of a good first time to write about. He did not talk about audience needs or who might be interested in hearing about our first times. After the discussion, the teacher distributed dittoed copies of the assignment, one of the three versions to each student. (See three versions of test topic, Appendix B.)

As students began to write, the teacher visited tables where students were writing in the third condition to assure them that their papers would be delivered to their real audience and they would receive credit for the responses they received from their readers. (This information appeared on the assignment, but the teacher did not feel sure all students would read past the instructions to "write.")

The writing assignment suggested that students might use essay, short story, letter, journal, "or any other form," for their writing. It might have seemed more natural if students required to write for particular audiences (Conditions Two and Three) were required to use letter format. We decided, however, to test to what extent students would *choose* the letter form as an indication of their awareness of the rhetorical context.

In addition, the teacher announced to all the classes that their writing would be read by outside teachers who were interested in student writing and who would not know who they were. This created a common condition for all topics which is typical of all writing tests: whoever the *apparent* audience is, there is a second audience of judges who will be reading the writing as a measure of performance. Students were told that participation affected their grade, but that ratings given by the researchers would not. They were also informed that as three slightly different versions of the topic were being used, they were not to compare notes between groups. They cooperated well with this request.

Papers were coded as to author, pooled, and scored blind by four readers using a single holistic scoring guide developed from randomly chosen samples from all audience conditions. The writing task did not appear on the essay script, so readers did not know that students wrote to slightly different versions. It was assumed that readers would expect a version of the topic like the first condition, no audience, since that is the most typical task for a writing test. The topic as described for readers was "Write about an occasion when you experienced some-

thing for the first time."

Each paper was scored holistically by two independent readers. Where readers differed by more than one point, a third reader resolved the discrepancy. A scale of one to four was used, with a final score on each essay of two to eight. Zero was reserved for papers which offered so little they were impossible to score, or which seemed far off the topic.

A second reading produced an analytic rating of several factors, including genre (essay, journal, letter, etc.), stance or role (using Britton's categories of expressive, poetic, transactional) with intermediary rankings between purely expressive writing with little sense of audience and poetic or transactional pieces clearly written with audience in mind. Direct addressing of the reader and use of first person were tallied for each condition, and openings and closings were rated.

In addition, the teacher rated each student on a scale of one to four on general ability and on general attitude for a total rating of two to eight points. This rating was used as an input variable to control for differences of ability in the three groups. Mean scores were adjusted using this teacher rating, since it was believed that the ability to respond to each condition might differ in students of different language ability or attitude to school.

RESULTS

Using the method of adjusted averages,* we found no differences in the mean holistic scores of the three audience conditions. Table One shows scores at each level, raw means for each of the three conditions, and adjusted means.

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*The method of adjusted averages is a simple statistical adjustment of scores which takes into account initial differences in ability among students. A pamphlet describing its use is available from the Bay Area Writing Project, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. Enclose $1.00 for reproduction and mailing.

TABLE ONE

Holistic Scoring of Essays from Three Audience Conditions: Adjusted Averages

Input Level: Teacher Rating of Ability and Attitude*	Condition I No Audience			Condition II Imagined Audience			Condition III Real Audience			Totals		Model Population
	n	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	n	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	n	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	n	$\bar{X}$	n
2	2	2.0	0	7	3.9	1.3	1	5.0	0	10	3.6	10
3	7	4.0	1.8	5	3.8	1.3	3	3.7	0	15	3.9	10
4	2	5.5	.9	4	4.8	1.9	6	5.2	1.8	12	5.1	10
5	6	4.5	2.4	2	5.0	2.8	4	5.0	1.4	12	4.8	10
6	2	7.0	2.0	4	6.0	.7	6	5.3	2.1	12	5.8	10
7-8	6	6.8	1.0	5	6.4	1.8	10	6.4	1.2	21	6.5	10
Total N	25			27			30			82		60
Raw Means		5.00			4.85			5.43			5.11	
Adjusted Means**		4.96			4.98			5.10				5.0

* Teacher rating correlates with holistic scores; $r = .54$, significant at $p \geq .05$, $df = 78$.

**Adjusted means computed using a weighting of 10 for each cell. The Z test of the hypothesis that each adjusted mean equals the model population mean ($mu = 5.0$) yields no statistical difference between means ($p \geq .05$).

(The method of adjusted averages allows us to copmare the three groups imagining that each group has the same number of students at each ability level. We see, in comparing raw averages, that group III has a much higher mean score, clearly due to the larger number of high ability students who were assigned to this condition. In this case, random distribution of students to experimental groups did not achieve an even distribution of individual factors which might affect performance.)

There are several possible explanations for the failure to find any great difference in general level of performance for the three conditions. The two most obvious, both of which may have played a part, are:

1. The "no audience" condition does in fact provide a real audience for this kind of assignment, so that, regardless of audience specification, the writers may assume that *whoever* reads their anecdotes will be interested simply because everyone loves to hear a good story. To the extent that this topic allowed a kind of gossiping or creation of literature, the differences among audiences was unimportant.

2. The students writing for the second and third condition, with audiences specified, may not have actually substituted these contexts for the test context: since they knew their papers would be read by adult judges, they may have seen this as the real audience, and failed to respond to the specified audience, who in most cases would be a peer.

In addition, some students in the third condition, writing for a real audience, had difficulty in thinking of an actual person with whom they could share their composition. We asked students to note on their papers the age of the person they were writing for, and their relationship to the chosen reader. Of the thirty students in this group, only sixteen indicated that they had had anyone special in mind when they wrote. For those who could not think of a recipient, the task became similar to the second group's task, writing for an imagined audience. A true test of the effects of natural or real contexts on student writing would apparently have to provide actual audiences, rather than asking students to "think of someone."

Finally, we know that the method of holistic scoring generally registers only fairly large differences in writing performance between groups--differences created by such strong factors as age, socio-economic level, and sex. If the differences among groups caused by writing for different audience conditions were not major, they would be unlikely to affect mean holistic scores.

TABLE TWO

A. Unadjusted Means by Grade Level for All Conditions (8 points possible)

Grade	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
9	40	4.9	1.9
10	10	3.7*	.8
11	16	5.9*	1.2
12	16	6.3*	1.5

*contrasted with previous grade, significant at $p \leq .05$
DF = 81.

B. Distribution of Grade level by Audience Condition

Grade	Condition I	II	III	Total
9	14	13	13	40
10	3	1	6	10
11	4	6	6	16
12	4	7	5	16
Totals	25	27	30	82

Note: It is not appropriate to adjust means for different grade levels, since it is not clear the extent to which the teacher's estimate of student ability and attitude has already subjectively "adjusted for" the age of the student.

Table Two (A) gives mean scores by grade level, across all conditions, showing that the scoring method was adequate to pick up grade level differences. The fact that tenth grade scores are lower than ninth grade reflects the fact that only below average English students from the tenth grade class are included in the sample, while the ninth grade group represents the full range of abilities. Each grade except tenth improves by half a standard deviation or better over the grade before. Table Two (B) shows that the distribution of students from each grade is roughly even across topic conditions and should not affect outcomes.

Table Three (A) gives mean scores by sex, with the expected outcome that females perform slightly better than males, as on most measures of verbal ability. The distribution of males and

TABLE THREE

A. Unadjusted means for Males and Females (8 points possible)

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Males	40	4.85	2.2
Females	42	5.50	1.8

B. Distribution of Males and Females by Audience Condition

Condition	I	II	III	Total
Males	12	16	12	40
Females	13	11	18	42
Totals	25	27	30	82

Note: It is not appropriate to adjust means for males and females using the teacher's rating of ability and attitude since the sex of the student exists prior to the teacher's ranking and may affect it in a variety of ways. Sex itself is an "input variable" or independent variable which could be used to "adjust" the mean scores of performance on various tests using other statistical methods than those used in this study.

females across the three topics is not entirely equivalent, as shown in Table Three (B), and may account for the slightly higher adjusted mean for Condition Three, "real audience."

Although we cannot say with certainty why the three kinds of writing topics do not have different overall scores, there are some interesting characteristics of papers across groups which support the idea that audience awareness is similar in all conditions because students are all really writing for unknown judges.

The analysis of genre chosen by student writers in each condition demonstrates the popularity of the general "school form," the informal essay. Fifty out of the total of eighty-two students used this form, as shown in Table Four, with about equal numbers of such essays appearing in all audience conditions.

We expected more pieces in the form of letters from students writing in Condition Three, since the letter seems a natural method of communication to an actual recipient, as we suggested in the assignment. But nearly half of the thirty-eight students in this group indicated they did not have anyone special in mind when they wrote. Only five students chose the letter form--all

TABLE FOUR

Mean Holistic Scores for Each Genre and Distribution of Genres Within Audience Condition

Condition	I No Audience			II Imagined Audience			III Real Audience			Totals		
Genre:	n	$\bar{X}$	Range†	n	$\bar{X}$	Range	n	$\bar{X}$	Range	n	$\bar{X}$	Range
Journal Entry	—	—	—	1	7	7	—	—	—	1	7	7
Letter	2	4	(2-6)	3	7	(6-8)	5	6	(4-8)	10	5.9	(2-8)*
Informal Essay (expressive — transactional	16	4.5	(2-8)	17	3.9	(2-6)	15	4.5	(2-8)	50	4.3	(2-8)
Short Story or Autobiographical Sketch (poetic)	7	7	(6-8)	6	6	(5-7)	10	6.4	(4-8)	21	6.5	(4-8)**
Totals	25	5.0	(2-8)	27	4.9	(2-8)	30	5.4	(2-8)	82	5.1	

* See table five for ratings of openings and closings. 7 students who chose to write letters received a rating of 3 or 4 for openings (good standard, good non-standard).

**See table five. 17 out of the 21 students whose papers were classed as "short stories" had "good *non-standard*" openings. 16 had top scores for closings.

†Total range of scores possible is 2 to 8. Range reported here for each cell included lower and upper limits of scores earned.

five of these naming an actual recipient. Other students, even some of those who named real recipients, tended overwhelmingly to write informal essays which were clearly directed to the teacher or unknown judge, in that they lacked any context statements to suggest awareness of their special audience.

It is interesting to compare the performance of those students in Condition Three who had actual audiences in mind and those who said they were writing for "nobody." The raw averages of the holistic scores were similar for these two groups: 5.63 for those addressing somebody, 5.64 for those addressing nobody. If we adjust for initial differences in students, using the teacher's rating of ability and attitude, we find a larger proportion of slightly weaker students among those who could not think of a real life recipient for their essays. This in itself is not surprising. But these students did just as well as the stronger students who did think of an audience. If the two groups had had equal numbers of weak and strong students, as we can imagine by using the teacher's rating to adjust the average holistic scores, we would find that the group which did *not* think of a real life audience would produce a mean score of 5.82 compared to 5.24 produced by the group who had an audience in mind. The significantly higher adjusted mean score of students in Condition Three, then, cannot be attributed to the fact that students generally write better when they are addressing real audiences. The sixteen students who thought of someone to write to do have a slightly higher adjusted mean score than students in Conditions One and Two. But since they performed less well than other students in the same group who did not name a recipient, their score is more reasonably attributed to the higher number of girls in the Condition Three group or to other factors we have not identified which might affect performance and which may differ in the three groups.

Across all conditions, when a student wrote in the letter form, some use was made of the rhetorical context, some attention paid to establishing a relationship with the addressee of

the letter and to creating a believable context for telling about a first time. Oddly, letters in Condition Two, written to imaginary audiences, were generally more convincing in this regard than letters written for real audiences. It may be that writers feel some things can be left implicit when writing for friends or siblings, whereas writers addressing an imaginary audience feel an obligation to make the rhetorical situation clear. Sample letters from each category are included in Appendix C.

It is interesting to note that two students writing in Condition One, for no audience, chose to use the letter form. These students accepted the opportunity to create their own imaginary rhetorical context. One of them wrote a successful piece, the other did not. A third student, the only journal writer in the sample, created an unusual solution for Condition Two, imagined audience, and received a high score.

The fourth genre category, identified as *short story*, included papers which moved beyond the tone of a gossipy anecdote or school assignment and showed signs of intent to create literature. Most of these were written in first person narrative, like the papers in the other categories, but were characterized by such things as use of imagery, imaginative openings and closings, richness of detail, use of dialogue, or deliberate building of suspense. These papers generally (but not in every case) received high scores, and appeared about equally in all groups.

Opening lines of each piece of writing were rated, using zero if there was no effective opening or if the paper was too short to rate the opening. A score of one was given to standard but poor openings, and a score of two was given to poor openings which, however, had tried to begin in a non-standard way. Typical standard poor openings were those that began, "I am going to write about a first experience," or "I remember one first-time experience." Non-standard poor included such beginnings as "My father took me to the store," and were relatively without

context-orienting statements, although they did "begin at the beginning." It could be argued that standard poor openings were better than non-standard ones since at least they alert the reader to the rhetorical context, but they appear to be reflex actions from students who are simply answering a question rather than creating a piece to stand on its own.

Opening lines rated three were standard good openings which included such beginnings as "I remember the first time I ever went in the water alone," or "Getting a car was great, but driving it for the first time was a near disaster." Non-standard good openings were rated four, and usually made no immediate mention of "first time," although that became clear later in the story: "It was a blistering day and I was already exhausted when I turned down the road to my house."

Table Five shows the frequency of each rating for each of the three conditions. The teacher and researcher agreed in reading these papers that the large number of *good* openings

TABLE FIVE
Openings and Closings Rated for Each Condition

A. Ratings of Openings: Frequencies of Ratings in Each Condition				
Condition:	I	II	III	Totals
0 - unclassifiable	1	0	0	1
1 - standard poor	2	4	9	15
2 - non-standard poor	4	1	4	9
3 - standard good	11	7	4	22
4 - non-standard good	6	15	13	34
Totals	24	27	30	81*
B. Ratings of Closings: Frequencies of Ratings in Each Condition				
Condition:	I	II	III	Totals
0 - unclassifiable	1	2	1	4
1 - no apparent closing	2	4	7	13
2 - minimum standard closing	15	10	14	39
3 - effective closing	6	11	8	25
Totals	24	27	30	81*

*One paper, missing data

overall reflects the general enthusiasm about the topic, and the general level of good, or intentional, writing. While Condition Two accounts for 39.3 percent of the top two ratings, Condition One claims 50 percent of the *standard good* papers. It may be that writing papers which are clearly academic exercises with the teacher as intended audience encourages students to create their openings with some care, as teachers may have demanded, which results in *good* openings, and to stick to teacher-approved formulas for opening essays, which results in *standard* openings. The effort by the tester to provide slightly different audiences and purposes in Conditions Two and Three seems to have encouraged students to take more risks, or to create openings that do not depend on the reader's knowledge of the assignment.

Students tended to produce a narrower range of closings than openings, so that fewer categories of closing were identified for rating. Four out of the eighty-two papers were unclassifiable because they were too short or the logic of the writing was unclear. Thirteen papers were rated as having no apparent attempts to make closure, even though there was sufficient writing to suggest a way to conclude. The remaining sixty-nine papers all had either a minimum standard closing which was just adequate to give the reader a sense of closure (e.g., "so that was my first kiss") or an effective closing which added something to the piece. These latter may have been standard, as in, "So ended my first experience as a babysitter. I am amazed that it wasn't my last!" Or they may have been more unusual, arising out of some special quality of the experience being recounted or the writer's attitude toward his possible readers: "The climb may have been only ten minutes, but it seemed hours in the making, and I remember it for a life-time."

It is interesting that differences in the writer's specified audience seem to have had less impact on closings than on openings. As with openings, Condition Two seems to get more top ratings than other conditions. The letter condition, especially

for the imaginary audience seems to have led more writers to interesting ways to conclude their pieces, while the no-audience or teacher-as-audience condition seems again to have encouraged formulaic responses, which in this case means fewer effective closings. Even though we pooled both standard and non-standard effective closings into one rating category, the total number of truly effective closings (twenty-five) was not as great as the number of bare minimum standard closings (thirty-nine). It may be that these students simply attend more to openings than to closings at this point in their development as writers or that there are fewer available formulas for closings so that more papers are missing real closings (seventeen total) than are missing openings (one), and more students produced standard but not very effective closings (thirty-nine) than produced standard but poor openings (fifteen). It may also be that closings are harder to master than openings. An opening, after all, may rely on the given assignment and still be effective. If a closing relies on the assignment, it may be merely a weak repetition of the opening statement. To avoid this pitfall while generating a fresh conclusion is a skill many of these students have not yet mastered.

RELIABILITY OF RATINGS

Since only one sample of student work was collected, it is not possible to speak of test-retest reliability of scores. We can, however, report level of agreement of ratings, since all papers were read twice. Holistic scores given by first and second readers correlated well ($r = .79$, $p \leq .05$). Discrepantly scored papers received a third reading. Ratings of all other characteristics were checked randomly using about 33 percent of all papers scored, with the absolute level of agreement between first and second raters of at least 75 percent on all measures for the essays receiving two ratings. Differences of opinion were resolved by discussion.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The fact that mean holistic scores were not different for the three kinds of audience conditions suggests that audience specification of this sort does not necessarily result in simple and direct improvement of student writing. Further, it seems that suggesting an audience, as it was done in this study, does not encourage use of the letter genre over the informal essay.

Many students writing for "real" audiences could not think of a particular person to write for, and in the space provided for identifying age of audience chosen and relation to writer, they wrote "no one." This suggests that teachers or testers who wish to test the effect of specifying a "real" audience should, in fact, provide such an audience, as in the original classroom assignment of writing for ninth graders.

Students writing for the first condition, with no specified audience, showed all the signs of audience awareness found in other papers--they produced as many short stories, as many good openings and closings, and as many top papers as the other conditions, suggesting that the general audience of test readers can provide a real rhetorical context for some writers, and for some kinds of writing.

The topic, "Write about a first experience," lent itself to lively anecdotal writing with many of the characteristics of intentional writing the teacher had observed in his original *Freshman Handbook* assignment. We may conclude that when the storytelling impulse is tapped, and students are asked to write from personal experience in an area where they may assume a) that their experience has some unique qualities which may be entertaining and b) that their experience has some universal qualities which may make it relevant to almost any reader, the possibility of purposeful writing--writing as if there is something important the writer wishes to tell, and therefore writing as fluently and effectively as the writer is able to--is increased, even if no

more authentic a rhetorical context is provided than writing for a teacher or researcher.

We must make clear, however, that this result may be true only for these students who are in large measure well-adapted to school tasks and to writing for the teacher as the primary audience. On the other hand, these same students are known on other occasions to produce dull, generalized prose, fragmented and error-ridden or simply impoverished, or simply to refuse to write anything substantial or coherent. Such writing was not obtained for this study, so we must accept the teacher's estimate that the writing in this study, which the readers found remarkably strong and interesting, was at least to some extent stimulated by the topic. Further studies are called for, not only to compare differences in audience effects but, given the same audience, to compare differences in topic effects, not only on general quality, but, for example, on choice of genre, kinds of devices used, kinds of mistakes, willingness to depart from standard openings and closings.

Finally, the study raises important questions it could not begin to address in the time available:

--Is there a difference in performance on a test if students engage in pre-writing discussion of the topic?

--Is there a difference in performance if students write *first* for real audiences, in real contexts, without considering eventual external judges, with the writing selected *later* for scoring by evaluators in comparison with papers written for evaluation?

--Might evaluators be negatively affected by some aspects of "real life" writing if they do not know the context in which the piece was written? (For instance, imagine a student writing for teen peers, using language that would be effective with friends but would seem unpolished, immature, or too informal to an evaluator who is looking for standard English.)

--Does knowledge that work will be graded or evaluated by an adult make better writing, even when the writing is done originally for peers, in real life contexts?

--Are students more likely to produce good writing in

contextual situations with opportunity for response and revision than in decontextual situations where the response expected is a grade? Are different students perhaps affected differently by these two conditions?

--What kinds of audience specification in a writing topic for a test might help students who otherwise would be less purposeful or less aware of audience in their writing? What kinds of audience specification might create difficulties, be incompatible with the thrust of the topic, be unnecessary and hence a possible distraction, or interfere with student performance in other ways?

Clearly the effects of audience specification on student writing are complex and will require extensive further study before we are able to make confident recommendations to evaluators of student writing. But studying audience effects should contribute to an understanding not only of how to measure student ability, but of the nature of the composing process and the factors which influence students differently as they attempt to respond to the assignment: "Write."

IV.

The Special Occasion in Context

Patrick Woodworth

It was only after the experimental test was designed and administered in mid-October that I had an opportunity to observe my students in repeated writing situations during the normal course of the year. Looking back on student responses to the experimental writing test, I came to the conclusion that the test had had the quality of a special occasion for many students and that, furthermore, many of them had written better pieces on this occasion than on any subsequent occasion, regardless of which form of writing task they had been given.

This year I had no sophomores, so there was no *Freshman Handbook* project. But I noticed that the writing for this research study had some of the same characteristics as the writing for the handbook--with a surprising number of students out-performing their usual standard, or remarking that the papers written for the test were their favorites of the year's output. (Analysis of these papers was done on photocopies; the originals were returned to the students to become part of each student's folder of work. The papers written for the research study could therefore be compared with other pieces composed by the students during the year.)

This outcome, which became apparent only in the larger context of ordinary school work, suggests that a major factor which may influence student performance on some writing assignments is what may be called a "sense of occasion." It may be that certain students want to do their best when the teacher gives verbal

and non-verbal clues that a particular writing assignment means something more than--or is just different from--the customary school assignment. A world larger than the immediate classroom--in this case, readers/teachers from other schools--is involved. Students may notice the special planning that is apparent in the way the assignment is presented to them.

If we use Brandt's distinction between "motivation" and "intention" (page 7 above), the sense of occasion can be seen as a boost to motivation. For some students the spur to greater effort may come as a desire to compete--since all papers will receive ratings. For others, there may be a feeling similar to that experienced by an actor approaching the stage, or by an athlete entering the chosen arena.

But just as in other kinds of performance where the sense of occasion may make one feel "up" for the duration of the action, the performer must also be able to forget his audience--his judges--in the moment of performing. He must concentrate on the performance itself, but his very concentration, his sens of urgency, will be, to some extent, a result of his sense of occasion. He will try as he rarely tries during rehearsals. This is when records are broken. The first paper included in Appendix C was written by a student who seemed to have been affected by a sense of occasion; throughout the school year he never wrote a more fluent or deeply felt paper. While this performance may have been a result of his response to the topic, the number of examples of good writing from students who later seemed to make little effort suggests that a sense of occasion played an important part in improving some performances.

On the other hand, other students may be inhibited by the special occasion, as inexperienced performers are distracted when they first face a real audience, so that mistakes increase. Such writers do not transcend their awareness of this special audience of judges. They draw no energy from the sense of occasion; instead they may labor over their work, complain they haven't enough time, even give up. Such writers need help in

learning to postpone thinking about audience at all until the editing stage--a provision writing tests do not make.

That few students had a negative reaction to this test may result from a combination of factors, including the students' knowledge that their papers would be read anonymously and their scores would not affect their class grades. By removing some of the traditional consequences of writing for judges, we may have removed those aspects of special occasion which are most distracting and inhibiting without removing the sense of occasion which eager performers thrive on. In many respects, this same condition occurred in the writing for *Freshman Handbooks*. There were readers and responders beyond the teacher; the occasion was special. But particular handbooks were not graded for credit. Instead, credit was assigned for completing the work. It may be that some kinds of motivational factors are enabling, while others are disabling for some students.

One noteworthy consequence of the special occasion provided for my students by our research study is that a few students value these papers above all others written during the year. In my junior-senior advanced composition class, I asked for volunteers to read short samples of their writing before the school's annual awards night assembly. One of the papers chosen as most memorable was written by a senior girl as part of the "first time" assignment--a first time behind the driver's wheel. The class felt it had just the right tone to lighten what is otherwise a solemn and somewhat tedious event.

They proved to be right. She read the piece before the gathered students and parents and found that they too laughed where the class had laughed. The appeal of her description was universal, creating an audience of students, parents, and teachers who recognized either their own or what might have been their own experience. Although the paper (Appendix D) was written for Condition Two (for imaginary audience of someone who has not yet had the experience), it proved effective with a general audience, which included those who *had* had such an

experience. It may be that performing for general audiences and writing for an unknown tester are comparable rhetorical situations.

We need to know more about students who are hampered by the absence of a natural context for communication. What aspects of their writing experience or their self-concept as writers might acccunt for their failing to see performing as a natural context for writing? The desire to entertain is as legitimate a rhetorical purpose as the desire to persuade or inform or explain. It should be, one might argue, the purpose *most* natural to writers, whose earliest encounters with written speech are usually stories. Further, years of oral practice are directed to a similar purpose, since the content of so many conversations is "gossip"--the basis of story-telling, arising naturally out of our instinctive use of language to comment on and share our experiences with other "spectators" (Britton, 1974).

Although writing from personal experience to a general or unknown audience may be a natural and easy kind of writing for some students, the results of the study do not suggest that this is true for all students, or that the informal personal essay or anecdote is the only kind of writing we may fairly attempt to assess. The results of our study suggest only that within this form, specification of audience may make little difference, while topics which allow writing from intention, and motivation derived from the sense of occasion *may* make a positive difference.

A great many more observations are needed--in natural and experimental settings, of ordinary and extraordinary classroom assignments or test situations--before we can determine which factors contribute reliably to creating a right occasion for writing, or which have what kinds of effects on different kinds of students.

It is almost certainly true that every writing occasion cannot be a special one. Perhaps, then, teachers should not

expect uniform quality or effort from our students on every assignment or test. Rather, we might attempt consciously to provide several special occasions in the course of a year, writing opportunities which have some of the characteristics shared by the *Freshman Handbook* and the research study described above:

--An *audience* beyond the classroom teacher--whether peers or other adults.

--A *rhetorical purpose* that allows the student to write with authority from his own experience and perceptions.

--A *topic* that allows maximum opportunity for students to discover their own *intention* to write.

--The kind of *motivation* provided by a sense of occasion, not merely by desire for the teacher's positive evaluation.

How necessary or sufficient each of these factors is, how much they overlap or become the same factor, how they operate for different students or teachers--these are subjects for further inquiry into the "write" occasion.

V.

Afterword: On Collaborative Classroom Research

Patrick Woodworth

In any given year I, as a teacher of English with four different preparations for six classes, may design well over a hundred different writing occasions for my students. Some are modified from assignments I have given previously; some are entirely new. All but the first weeks' writings are chosen or created to meet the specific developmental needs of the particular groups doing the writing. Around December I am caught up in a swirl of assignment, explanation, pre-write, first draft, revision, proofreading, final copy, reading of papers, post-write discussion, grading, sharing of papers in class, finding or making a new assignment, etc., etc., etc. Rarely do I have time to fly out of the swirl to look at its configuration--I want the students to do as much writing and get as much feedback as possible during the year.

The opportunity to work with Catharine Keech in the study described in Part III above provided me with an occasion to consider some possible reasons for the success of a particular sequence of assignments. It provided me with an occasion to reflect on my work in the company of a teacher now concentrating on research, someone asking questions and attempting to find answers that might have application beyond this immediate classroom context. Although I hope our work will have value for other teachers, I know that its value for me lies principally in the time we spent together reading papers from the handbooks,

participating in the analytic and holistic scoring of the papers written for different audiences, and talking over the implications of our results.

For me, student writing takes on a new significance when I am asking fresh questions of it. It's not that I don't ordinarily, in the course of evaluative and diagnostic reading, find time to enjoy what students offer me through their writing. But during our research I found that I had a heightened awareness of the unique quality of the work my students have done and that my efforts to help them improve were validated. That validation and awareness grew out of the dialogue Cathy Keech and I sustained during our work.

To do research such as ours is to extend the dimensions of the classroom writing context. My students gained new audiences for their writing: one of our holistic readers teaches in San Francisco, another in Mt. Diablo School District--areas quite different from Tomales Bay. I have a new audience for my thinking about writing and, in publishing this research, a potential for connecting with teachers working in even more diverse contexts. With each new connection comes the possibility of a fresh point-of-view, a new perspective from which to reflect on the demanding, absorbing, and often isolated activity of teaching students to write.

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Appendix A

Student Writing for Freshman Handbook

The following pages give the flavor of the writings students include in their handbooks. (To be fully appreciated they should be read as they appear integrated with photos, cartoons, montages, drawings.) None of the excerpts is an example of good writing in any absolute sense. I judge each student's writing by comparing it with previous work. For some, improvement means writing anything at all; for others, a refinement of skills learned the previous year. For a few, improvement is a more subtle use of point of view for ironic effect. But what makes this sequence remarkable is that everyone makes some improvement--a fact I attribute to the immediacy and authenticity of the task and to the desire to prepare the material for a familiar yet relatively distant audience. In fact, the vigor of the writing is probably the result of the students' desire to establish his new identity as a sophomore.

LETTER TO A FRESHMAN

The first two letters were written by reluctant writers--writers who would not write much else the rest of the year and who had written only rarely the year before. Yet both establish and maintain a definite tone, support generalizations with specifics, play with language, and attend to transitions both within and, in the second, between paragraphs--fairly sophisticated techniques for Tomales sophomores.

Letter #1

Freshman,

I hope you dont think you are going to be big people this year, 'cause if you do your going to be in for a big suprise. You are little mangy little punks, and you really dont belong in Tomales anyway. So you Freshpunks stay hidden in your corner and don't come out until you are sophmores. But if you decide to I wouldn't walk by the smoking area unless you want your tongues burnt and your hair singed. Also stay out of the bathrooms unless you want to be flushed down the toilet. If you little kids think you were big in 8th grade, you are going to feel like Kindergartners. If the Freshman who like to play football you not only get to play football you get to pick up towels, pick up equipment, sing, and swim in the mud. If you don't do all this you will find out what will happen to you in Rabbit Drills. When you are riding on the bus to a football game you will be cramed into the back of the bus like sardines, and you better not talk or you won't be able to play in the football game. So all you Fresh punk better stay in line or something worse could happen to you.

Letter #2

Advice to the Freshman

When you first come to T.H.S. or T.H.C., you must know some of the basic rules. I will try to give you a few that I learned the hard way.

The first rule is to stay out of the way of seniors, most of the juniors and some of the sophomores. If you do get in the way of these "superior" people, you might experience red marks and you will be known as a punching bag in the halls and school yard.

Another rule is to stay away from the caferia unless you want an ulcer, heart burn or food poisoning. The tacos are greasy with alot of lettuce or grass: the hot dogs are old and re-heated several day in a row: the chicken and rice has no chicken. The candy machines take your money. The candy is stale and the chocalate are melted. If the coke and the candy accidenlty does work for you, then be prepared to share it with a dozen people that are waiting for a bite or drink.

If you are late for a class besure and not be seen by Mr. X---- or Mr. Y----. They watch the halls like a hawk. They love to catch new students and give them the second degree.

It is almost impossible "but is still done" to cut at noon and leave the school. The front office has windows that look right outside. They can see out but you can't see in. If you get caught; they are always looking for "workers" to pick up papers and junk around the school yard. The best rule is never ride the bus...you ride with little children that have paper and rubberband wars. The driver is a prime target. The roads are all curves and someone is always sick. If you want to go to someones house, the note must be turned into the School and not the driver. Needless to mention, there is never a seat.

Once a year, there is a bomb threat. Then, you stand outside in the wind and rain until the "Pigs" come and go thru the trash. If you are lucky, you don't get "blowen up" when you open your locker.

As a "green" freshman the P.E. class is no joy to begin with. You are expected to dress each day and not to complain about the dance thing and running for miles and miles and more miles. Also you have to put up with girls and what they want or are able to do.

The lockers don't work and aren't big enough. If you miss a day of school, always have a written excuse with a good reason. The school is all ways fogy or windy. Try to carry a pencil or pen and one for a friend.

With all this advice, you all will become sophomores in one year...

The next letter was written by a student who wrote more often but usually only when the assignment appealed to her. In it, the writer specifies her "baby sister" as audience and develops her cautionary tone with gleeful sarcasm and hyperbole.

Letter #3

Dear baby sister,

Now that you are at the age, where you have to face all the miserable facts of high school, I will avice you of the many dangers.

Beware of the dreaded locker room, where every time you enter all these little pink bodies go running for cover. Sometime when nothing is going your way you may come across a herd of kids who think it is a funny joke to throw you head first, with all your cloths on in the cold rain of the showers.

Keep away from the posh cafeteria, where, every day you see the menu in a mushy cloud, soaring through the Air. I suggest that instead of eating in the Cafateria, that you go to the patio, where the moment you step out the door you are completely enveloped by big, yellow and black wasps.

I advise that you stay away from thoughs Loud Rallies, where the little girls hop around in little skirts yelling and screaming. The rallies are where sometimes you are called down from the audience to perform some stupid act with 500 eyes of blue, green, brown, black and in betweens all beady and tense with anticipation. I have found a way to escape the noise and confusion of the rallies, by going to the library. That is where your afriad to move for fear of making too much noise.

Many times in the year, you will sit down and have a shark object punctuare your skin. You will stand up and find a rusty old thump tack in your seat.

Keep cautious of the garbage cans, for once in a while you will be torn from the ground and thrown into a garbage can full of half eaten cafateria lunches with only your calves and new kinney shoes to be seen.

WELL I WELCOME YOU WITH AN OPEN HEART. HAVE FUN!! HA! HA!

Your sister Susan.

P.S. Watch out, I'll be waiting. Tee HEE.

The last letter was written by one of the most gifted students I have had. As usual, he has stretched the boundaries of the assignment, mingling letter and essay forms. His influences include Woody Allen, Howard the Duck, and Monty Python.

Letter #4

The Watchful Eye

There are many things that a young attendant of Tomales High should know before undertaking that perilous first year. Being a surviver and holder of that dubious honor of once being a freshman at one time in recent years, I have now among other things, the right to produce such long and yet obscure and totally confusing sentences, such as the one you have just perused. Yes, but magnanimous behavior and cantankerous spirit are but two of the privledges one gains after having completed that fatefull first year. For in truth I warn you that ALL personality traits must be carefully concealed when you are a freshman. For if an upper classman is led by your behavior to so much as suspect that you are actually a living and thinking entity in society, and not just a bearer of the title 'freshman' ....you better pack up Sam, because you're gonna have trouble!

Take heed, friend! Pay attention to the tale of X----, the late and forgotten freshman who dared to laugh out loud when a Senior got his finger ground to the bone in a pencil sharpener. X----is now stuffed smugly into one of the jars in the Biology room.

In time you will notice that the I.Q's of the upper classmen seem to diminish more and more with each passing year. The Sophomores appear to be less intelligent than they were a year ago, the Juniors less intelligent than the sophomores, and last and least intelligent, the Seniors. In fact last year the Seniors had formed an exclusive club, in which members had to have an I.Q. of 33. It was called, of course, the '33 Club', but it folded almost as soon as it had begun, as a result of non attendance at club meetings (the members forgot where the clubhouse was).

The upperclassmen are only part of the peril. The system will get you if the Seniors don't. If you seem to imagine that the school staff is ignoring you because you are a Freshman, stop imagining; they really ARE ignoring you.

If you are one, as I am, who prefers to purchase a school lunch, don't worry about the food...its perfectly harmless, in fact most of it is not even alive. The thing to watch out for is the lunch line.

Over the past couple of years, the lunch line has claimed more Freshman victims than the sharks in the locker room showers. Aside from the line's length (it has been known to stretch for several miles) there are many places in it where it is not wise to linger. An example: the space in front of the teachers' room. If the swinging door doesn't get you the smoke fumes will. Another place that many Freshmen wind up is at the end of the line...but there is nothing you can do to remedy the situation. Not until you are a sophomore, when you are permitted to cut in

line and for the man who likes to take his chances, you can push and shove. Juniors are permitted to do the above in addition to making loud remarks and comments on a wide range of subjects from the food to old ladie's footwear. Seniors, as the rule goes, can do anything they damn well please short of murder, and sometimes including that.

There are several ranks of Freshman. The highest is the Freshman who has a relative who is a Senior in the school. He is termed the 'Grand Freshman.' Next is the 'Venerable Freshman' who is so ranked because of his or her relationship with an upper classman. Third on the list is the 'Freshman' and you are given the sole and reassuring identity of being no more and no less than a statistic in state tests. Last is the 'Sub Freshman,' the one who is always overlooked, has no relatives in school or out and who openly admits to disliking Farrah Fawcett Majors and red Corvettes.

You will find that being a Freshman, there is safety, if not obscurity in numbers. In other words, if you travel in groups of three or more you are less likely to be made fun of as an individual. However not even travelling in groups can save you from the sniper behind the coke machine. Some people try to travel in groups of one, and this, of course does not work.

You must keep in mind that no Freshman is impervious. Each day you face iminent danger. Keep a watchful eye. And this page will self destruct in five seconds.

DESCRIPTION OF BEHAVIOR

The first of these was written by a very reluctant writer: stark notes from the underground. The next was written by a student who had to retake one semester of his sophomore year. He still resisted proofreading, but this piece represented my first glimpse into what he could really do. Number three was written by a temperamental student who generally scorned my approach to teaching English, but here she experiments with form, tone and point of view. The last I include although it was written by a senior in a composition class. It reveals an eye for detail and an ear for speech, the principal qualities I was after in the assignment.

Description #1

When I got on the bus this morning I looked around for a good seat. I saw one and preceeded to go to it. I sat down, got out my piece of paper and look for freshmen. I saw one just a couple of seats in front of me. His name is X---, some people call him x.x. or some other stupid names. He was sitting their with his briefcase and banjo. The bus got filled up and his seat had to have three people in a seat he got mad and didn't want to move over. He was forced to move and almost started crying. After he moved over he got crunched into the corner. The other two guys did have much room because X--- is very fat, dum and ugly. He was wearing a black T-shirt with ripped up pants. His hair was sticking up everywhere. He turned around and saw me staring at him. He started to make faces at me since I finished writing about him. I decided to flip him off. I did, then I turned around and didn't look at him the rest of the ride.

Description #2

As usual, I started out this morning to school. Over the shrouded hills, with the delicate greens and browns of pasture-lands, and past the lonly starkness of the old buildings. As I was driving I was thinking about what would happen when I got to school. A few days earlier I had applied for a school parking permit. But I noticed suprisingly few other people were. So naturally I was curious to see what would happen when the Vice Principal, Mr. X--- tried to enforce the rules which stated "He who drives a wheeled beast onto these sacred grounds of learning shall have affixed to that beast evidence of permission to leave it there. As I drove up I could see the perplexed expression on Mr. X---'s face as He wildly waved his arms, desperately trying to direct traffic. The students were equally agitated by the situation, squealing the tires and fighting for a place in the ditch. Through all of this mess I drove. Dodging the suprisingly quick car doors, and ignoring the dirty looks. As Mr. X--- saw my permit he briefly smiled and waved me through. As all the smoke and comotion rose in the distance I calmly walked up the steps of the school and went to class.

Description #3

We are on a spy mission from the Rebel Alliance against the Galaetic Empire. We have been stationed at Tomales, a community with quite a variety of beings, from jawas to Imperialists. There are plenty of Imperialists. Our mission: to integrate ourselves into the community and observe what goes on there; then report back to the Senate on the results.

We are aboard a common passenger ship, one that regularly

makes runs to Tomales. There are other beings on board, Mostly jawas and Imperialist officers and stormtroopers. A few other assorted beings are also on board, beside we humans. There is a huge Wookie and a handful of beings I've only heard rumors of. It is the Imperialists that we are concerned about, however.

They are mostly silent, only exchanging a few words between themselves. They display their authority by their armor and deactivated, but potentially deadly, blaster guns. They sit off by themselves, not taking much notice of the rest of us. I feel comfortable enough with my hidden light saber, as I know the rest of the Rebels do, though I hope we won't have to bring them out.

We are approaching Tomales. As our ship slows, the stormtroopers become more watchful. They pick up their equipment and prepare to move into the community. The jawas and other beings fall silent. They are also watchful, though of the stormtroopers. The Wookie doesn't seem to have much worry. The others leave the massive one alone.

As we all leave to go to our separate centers, the stormtroopers fall to keeping watch. The other beings give them a wide berth, especially the jawas. We Rebels go along with the others to our assigned posts. There are about 30 in each center, with an imperialist officer in charge of each. We all take to our assigned tasks. None of us but the utterly deffiant and reckless dares to leave the room, for Darth Vader is sure to be in the halls, along with his stormtroopers.

On breaks between center changes we have time to take count of the number of Imperialist forces. We each have been assigned a certain area to study. I count altogether too many in my area. It will be a hard task to eventually overtake them.

On the lunch break we have a much better chance for observation. Again, the stormtroopers and Imperialist officers are by themselves. They talk more during this time, and we are able to pick up some information pertaining to their forces and other data the senate needs for its purpose. We are lucky that the Imperialists aren't too guarded about their conversation.

By the end of the day we have compiled quite a bit of information. One advantage given us is that the Imperialists are of the disdainful type, and we can come closer to them while they only think we are ignorant, inferior beings. It is insulting to us, but useful.

As the working day ends we again take to the ship that will take us back home. The Senate will be pleased with the information we have. We will return again tomorrow to see what we can learn about the central authorities. One of our number has somehow befriended the giant Wookie, who says he has some inside connections and will help us. He, also, has joined our number. One day we will overthrown the Empire and return to better living.

Description #4

'Hey, I hear they're makin' cookies down in the Home Ec. room today!"

"Oh yea?, well heck lets go see who's in there." It was A.A. with another of his great ideas.

We walked down to the Home Ec. room where we found B.W. busy in the kitchen. Just then B.B. walked out of the artroom & started chatting. After talking for a few minutes A.A.'s actions caught my eye.

He was hugging the wall, just before the window of the Home Ec. room. He kept peeking around the corner real slow, then jolting his head back real fast. Suddenly he gave a quick knock on the window catching, not only B.W.'s attention but half of the classe's including Mrs. X's.

"Oh s...," A.A. said pulling his head back with that big grin on his face, that is his and no one else's. Relieved that the class just went back to their cooking, A.A. began peeking again.

'Hey B.W.," he half whispered. B.W. was so intense on taking the cookies out of the oven, he didn't hear a thing.

'Man, B.W. is deaf, I can't believe that guy." A.A. cackled.

Now Mrs. X had her back turned. A.A. waved his hands above his head & jumped up & down. Just as he was in the process of doing this, C.C. came walking by. He looked at A.A. and shook his head, saying "Poor fellow needs help."

Finally B.W. looked up. A.A. stopped jumping & motioned for B.W. to give him a cookie.

"What?" B.W. motioned back.

"A cookie, A.A. whispered, give me some." The next time A.A. peeked around the corner B.W. stuck his tongue out at him.

"I don't believe this guy," A.A. muttered as he dropped down on his knees. The next thing I knew he was crawling on the ground. He trucked over to the door & stuck his head in. "Oops" he said, as he peeked around. Mrs. X was right there. He froze with his eyes & mouth wide open. After a minute of this stillness she walked to the opposite corner of the room. "Allright," A.A.'s eyes lit with excitement.

'Hey B.W.," he said holding his hat out, "Throw me a few."

"Get out of here" B.W. growled. "These have to be graded."

"Just one won't matter" A.A. pleaded, without losing the grin.

"Forget it, A.A., I can't."

"I never seen nothin' like it," A.A. walked away. "Can't even give me one cookie, what a tight wad" A.A. muttered still grinning--"Oh well, I tried."

INTERVIEW

Examples of two interviews: one by a reluctant writer and another by an enthusiastic one. Although not all interviews were humorous in tone, the idea of the "wise answer" caught on. But even here the tone of the humor varies and is not stereotyped.

Interview #1

What is your name? - A.A.

How do you feel about the teachers?
They are OK, except for the fact they are dumber than me.

What about the lunches?
I've never had one, I don't want one, I never will have one.

The seniors?
Just don't breathe in their presence.

What are your feelings on the locker room?
Rats are let loose to eat up all the jocks laying around.

How would you describe Mr. X---?
A well educated killer ape who likes to eat students.

How do you feel about Mr. Y---?
He likes to blind people with his bald head, which is registered with the F.B.I. as a lethal weapon. In his C.D.M. class we don't use lights. He takes a flashlight and shines it on his head, it lights up the whole room and also conserves energy. He also likes to wear his Nazi armband and torture students with Polish origins.

Have you read any good books lately?
Of course I have read the assigned English books such as "Interview with a Perverted Platypuss," "Sex Throughout the Ages," "Show Me," "The Hite Report," and "Dumbo goes to New York and gets Mugged."

What do you think of the Rallies?
I espetially liked bellie dancers who came to the last one. The cheif excitment is when the cheerleaders do their strip tease.

Interview #2

Interview of a Student

I am sitting here on the stage with A.A. as everybody piles their lunches into their faces. I've prepared 13 questions and their answers are quite interesting.

Intv. - "Being a freshman, have you noticed how the lunch line grows shorter in back of you and longer in front?"
A.A. - "I don't eat school lunches for more than 47 reasons."

Intv. - "Have you met Mr. X---the hard way yet?"
A.A. - "No & I hope I don't. He ran into my stomach once and made an impression."

Intv. - "How do you feel about the low number of water fountains around the school?"
A.A. - "They are merages."

Intv. - "Have you ever been up behind the tennis courts for any reason other than playing tennis or searching for a lost tennis ball?"
A.A. - "Yes, I was there once to watch the "grass" grow."

Intv. - "Do you go home each day to a loving mother who ask you how much homework you have & what you learned that day?"
A.A. - "Yes, I go home to a loving mother who asks me how much homework I have then she makes me work on it until 10:00 at night."

Intv. - "How do you feel about the freshman revolving classes?"
A.A. - "They are worse than the hot lunches."

Intv. - "What is your opinion on the mad rush for the candy machines at lunch?"
A.A. - "Very unhealthy; like plastic & synthetic man..."

Intv. - "Did you know that 4 years at T.H.S. could quite easily turn you into a nymphomaniac?"
A.A. - "I've been here less than a year."

Intv. - "What is your opinion on the cheerleaders here at T.H.S.?"
A.A. - "They wear short skirts, make alot of noise & have an I.Q. that of a pelican."

Intv. - "Do you enjoy Led Zeppelin when you are space?"
A.A. - "HEY MAN...THAT'S GROOOOOOVY...LIKE I CAN REALLY RELATE...If I were in your shoes I'd untie them."

Intv. - "How do you feel about the 50 minute bus ride twice a day?"
A.A. - "Puking comes easy."

Intv. - "When entering the boys' bathroom do you ever look up to see if there is a boys face on the little black

plaque?"

A.A. - "Always, I want to see if his eyes are red with black circles."

Intv. - "Have you ever noticed how the weeks go by faster at T.H.S. when you neglect your daily homework?"

A.A. - "Hell no! It seems like years before Friday comes along."

OBSERVATION OF AN ADULT

In many ways this is the most involving, subtle and risky of the writings in this sequence. Here we discuss the differences between showing and telling, between presenting and judging. You will see that the lesson is by no means learned perfectly. But when students hear papers like numbers two and three read aloud in class, they realize what point of view is. Both are written about the same person

Observation number one is written by a very reluctant writer, but his admiration for his subject pulls him through. The last (number four) was written by the same person who wrote Description number four. Again, this writer showed me what could be done with the assignment.

Observation of an Adult #1

After a short break, he walks back into a world you've never seen before. He sits, waiting pationaly for his students to come in from break. Then suddenly without warning he leaps toward you and asks excitedly "Alright people lets see what you had for homework." Then everybody starts looking for there homework that they thought they had done. Moving with the speed of a bat, he goes to the board and starts to review the homework. Then when you least expect it, he strikes like a caged corbra, he hits the chalkboard, turns and with a blood curdling scream to waken the class. With the energy of an ox, this little man runs around the room. Screaming at the top of his lungs "See how much fun you can have with a one". By the middle of class, when you feel like haveing a good paper fight, he calms you down by giving your brain a malfunction by giving you enough homework to last you a quator. he has a brown suitcase that does not match with his green suit with white shirt & black tie. While you are just about to die, you think that he ran on battererys. This remarkable man gets only freedom between

classes & at lunch and during this time he is shaking like a bellydancer right in the middle of her act. So he drinks all the coffee in the pot, and smokes his & every body else's cigaretts. By the end of the day, all the other teacher's are begging to go home but this man corrects all his paper's and then helps the other teacher's work. he is just a work horse in a sort of way, nobody could match the little man he pulls his weight & other people's to like a burro carring sticks for fire wood. he is truly a remarkable man.

Observation of an Adult #2

Dressed in her royal blue outfit with a bright yellow shirt underneath it she stands behind her desk with her brown glasses on, holding a pencil in her hand. She says to a student "Put a top on your desk." As her desk top falls off the class fills with laughter, Miss X---puts her elbow on her desk and a big smile fills her face. After a minute everything is normal. "Sh! will all of you's be quiet and open your books to Chapter 5." After the class still has alot of talking and she is saying nothing, you hear "O.K. lets knock off the talking." The class is quiet for a minute and before I know it, the class was just as noisy again.

Now as I glance up she is passing out all of the tests. I get mine back and she moves on. "Please get quiet." She says all of this with a nice tone in her voice, she doesn't sound mean or like she is mad, but instead a nice tone followes her words. She's always standing very still, and she uses alot of hand motions from behind her desk. She reminds me of a kitten, mostly quiet with delicate little movements but you have to really pay attention to her, when she's under pressure she gets very uptight and acts like she doesn't know what to do. She asked us alot of questions on the chapter, she also talked about the questions she asked, her voice got louder when she was talking to the whole class.

When she was done talking and the class was working she just leaned over her stand in her own kind of way and looked at everybody. When a group of people were laughing, she got a smile on her face like she had been listining or she was part of the group. She had a blank sort of look on her face as she glanced around the room. The room was very quiet now with just the squeks from the chairs of the people who were moving. There was a strawberry odor filling the room that was the girl right along side of me. As the bell rang everybody was getting out of their chairs like a bomb was going to go off. The room was completely empty in about 30 seconds. I waited until everybody had left to see what Miss X-- would do.

She just watched the kids leaving, she started walking around the room, pushing chairs in and straightening the desks,

she had a look like she would start laughing any minute. I picked up my books and left with the sounds of her putting the desks and chairs neatly in place right behind me. I picture that bright yellow skirt under her blue outfit and wondered to myself what she would wear next time I had that class.

I thought of the way the kids were rushing from the classroom, not realizing how important she is to their lives and I can see now, what an important part every student plays in her life.

Observation of an Adult #3

"Sh, O.K. you guys are all Southern planters alright, now you guys down here are slaves, O.K. now what you people up her think of the slaves down here?" Miss X--- says with here low muted voice.

Miss X---, a big lady with a built of a super heavy weight olympic weight lifter wears patriotic, solid, plain, conservative clothes, has a Micky Mouse watch on the underside of her wrist she always uses a lot of examples when she teaches.

She has a white complextion, freckles and wears big glasses but her face is very plain, you can't tell her feelings from facial expression. I never seen Miss X--- sit down on big rear end in class. She has a podume which she lectures from and leans against.

She doesn't force or push you to learn. If you want a good grade you just have to listen and study. Usually she lectures the whole class spilling out information from her bloodhoundish mouth. She is like a talking text book, she lectures throw out tons of information orally and us students try absorbing, storing it in our little memory banks to use for the next test. In her long speeches she uses thousands of short "shs," to quiet the class down and "O.K.s, alrights" to answer questions or resume her lecture.

This very plain, calm, cool, relaxed, dull, smart, strang lady never smiles if she does it's very short. When she gets mad or irritated she keeps her cool but refers to the student in a stern tone "lady!" or "sir!".

But this lady has another image other than a Soc. Stud teacher. As a band director or I should say a easy, calm, lieniant coach for the sport of music.

Mrs. X--- over all is not a extremest but she is a conservative. She has a hard shell encircling her feelings and I don't think that shell will ever break. She is smart and cool she kind of gives a image of Mr. Spock.

Observation of an Adult #4

Using long sweeps, I painted, filling in each letter with black paint which shined like pattent leather. Glancing up at the long row of blank words I noticed the quietness of the building for the first time that night. All I could make out were the soft swish sounds of Mr. X---'s broom, down the hall a ways.

Frustrated with the rate of production, I layed on the floor resting my head on one hand and painting with the other. Like a glider sifting through the air my mind wandered onto the happenings of the day. Suddenly I felt a faint tap on my shoe.

"Oh, its you A---, you weren't movin', I thought you was a rock."

I crained my neck around what seemed like three times and bumped right smack into a dusty pair of light brown Rollin soled shoes. Gradually lifting my eyes upward, I couldn't help but notice that the brown levi jeans were a bit too long probably because they were being weighted down from the 30 keys which hung from their belt loop. They jingled as Mr. X--- shifted his feet, leaning one arm on the broom handle and the other on his hip. Now his green and brown plaid shirt came untucked on one side, which made him look all the more natural. My eyes moved up to his dark face, just watching his big brown eyes, I can tell he's laughing because they crinkle up and shine like marbles. Shaking his head and rubbing a thick dirty hand over his face he says "Oh Jesus" as if he thinks I'm crazy.

Then the new hair cut caught my eye. It wasn't a styled type of cut, there isn't enough hair for that, it was just a basic butch.

"Hey, where didya get that fancy hair cut?," I couldn't help asking.

"Oh, you like that?" he asked with a serious look on his face rubbing his head. "Ya know, I went downtown to Pete's Lawnmower service, only charged me half-price, pretty good huh?"

"Hey, he said, changing the subject, lets make a deal. We'll have a race, I'll do all the halls and you finish the sign. The slow guy buys the other guy a coke O.K.?"

"Sure, I said I'll smoke ya."

"Hey, he warned pointing a finger at me, you're looking at Ole Speed-O himself, you better get to work." Straightening up, he stepped over me, and walked off in that strut which was faster than usual now and whistled a tune.

Suddenly seconds later a loud static sound interrupted my thoughts. It was Mr. X--- in the office putting the radio on over the speaker. I had to laugh as I thought of how he likes

to listen to that Oakie-country style music, even though the radio is mostly static.

He isn't the normal type of janitor who you only speak to when your locker's jammed, he's the friendly type who makes you laugh. If I'm mad about something he never fails to say "Smile, A---, things can't be that bad." I don't know if it's the way he says it or that serious look which suddenly bursts out in laughter but it makes me crack up.

Just looking at Mr. X---, a person might think he's a mean guy. The way he eyes the students at the lunch tables, trying to catch the gang who's been leaving the mess for the past week.

"There they go," he says spotting the three people, and watching as they try to put on innocent faces. "Those damn pigs, I bet they never do that at home," he mumbles. "You watch, he points his finger at me "Next week I'll have three helpers, I'm gonna report them to the boss," he said, and folded his hands across his chest.

No matter when I see Mr. X---, he's always got something to say. If I'm in class he'll walk by and wave, giving me that sly smile as if to say "Don't worry only two more hours left." If we're having burritos for lunch he'll say "Oh I hope you remembered to bring a lunch, cause today they're havin' those belliburners," and if it's the day of a board meeting he'll be cussing because he'll have to set up all the chairs.

"Hey what ya got on your mind A---, I been done for fifteen minutes." It was Mr. X--- coming around the corner.

"Oh God," I thought as I looked again at the same amount of blank words on the sign. I hadn't painted a whole letter since he left.

"What the heck you been thinkin about all this time A---?" Mr. X--- asked with a concerned look.

"Oh nothing really great," I replied laughing to myself.

He walked away giving me that look as though he's sure I'm crazy now.

FRESHMAN RESPONSES

When the handbooks are completed they are given to the freshman English classes for their appreciation and response. Each student is asked to write a letter to at least one group of editors. These are given to the editors so they can see how their work was received. Yes, there really is an audience besides a teacher.

Response #1

Dear Editors,

I read your freshman hand-book and I thought it was terrifix! I liked the advise you gave to the freshmans and I took some of it. I specially liked the way you got different kinds of pictures to represent all the teachers. My three favorite pictures are X---, Y---, and Z---. I thought those were really funny, and made me crack up, since the one that represents X--- reminds me of him. You guys did a great job. I really enjoyed reading the letter to a Freshman, it was very funny.

Sincerely,

A.A.

Response #2

A--- and B---;

Your 'Freshman Burnout' book is the straight forward, honest book of the year by far - (I'm very surprised that the teacher ever let you send it because of the Mr. X--- cracks!).

As far as I'm concerned, and just about everybody else, that your put-downs are totally true: "Crome dome"/"Mr. X--- has a bee inside his head"/"unpleasant chates with Mr. X---, etc.

This is the only 'not boring' book of them all because you don't talk so much about "goodie-goodies". You may have exagerated a little bit, but it really piants a perfect picture!

The teacher probly, or a leased half, do all the things you talk about, at some time or another: drinking/smoking/scinny-dipping/and raising hell in the 'teachers lounge.' The funny thing is, is the way they act so perfect and cover up when you mention anything about it. They all come to school in thier clean, new Pinto's and volkswagon's, formaly walk to and from their destinations so calmly, dress so promply, and speak so properly, but when get out of this, as you say "Prison", they probly do all the opposite...Its a real far-out handbook, and thanks for the advice.

B.B.

Appendix B

Topic in Three Versions for Experimental Study

TOPIC: Think of an experience in which you did something for the first time.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Version 1: Describe this experience. You may write a story, a journal entry, or any other form of your choice. You will have thirty minutes to write.

Version 2: Imagine you are writing this description for someone who is about to experience this activity for the first time. You may write a story, a letter, a journal entry, or any other form of your choice. You will have thirty minutes to write.

Version 3: Write about this experience for a particular person (brother, sister, friend, etc.) who has not had such an experience. After this person had read your description he or she should be prepared to undergo the experience himself (or herself). Sometime between now and Christmas, after this paper has been returned to you, plan to deliver your paper to your reader so that he or she may respond. Be sure to tell who your reader is on the back of your paper (i.e., brother, age 12). You may write a story, a letter, a journal entry, or any other form of your choice. You will have thirty minutes to write.

Appendix C

Sample Test Papers
Showing Holistic Scores and Analytic Ratings

I. Condition I. Score of 8. Genre: Short Story. Opening: Standard good.

The first time I walked across the Golden Gate bridge is an experience I'll never forget. I had come down from Rohnert Park with Dave, a friend, at 4:30 in the morning. By the time we got off the bus at the toll plaza it was 6:00. We had to wait until 6:00 for the pedestrian walkway to open. We sat in the small adjacent park and looked out on the bay and city. The fog was heavy, but surprisingly it was warm. The lights of the city were dull because of the fog and even the beacons on the Pyramid and Bank of America barely shone through. The lights on the Bay Bridge were bright as was the Alcatraz lighthouse.

Dave stood up and looked at the big clock above the toll plaza. He said we only had a couple minutes to wait. The men with the keys drove up to the gate, opened it, and let us through without a word. Looking ahead I could not see the other side because of the gradual arch in the center. It seemed to be a lot longer than a half-mile long.

We walked at a fairly slow pace not talking much. Dave was more interested in the cars than in the view. I on the other hand liked seeing the many tugboats. As we walked on more and more cars clogged the bridge and along with the heavy fog slowed the pace to a crawl.

Upon reaching the south tower the size of the plaques amazed me, I read them and noticed Dave's grandfather's name on one. I was really excited but Dave didn't care. Dave threw a couple of coins at the tugboats, hitting one but not damaging it. I gazed up at the huge tower and was not amazed when I could not see the top. We headed forward.

About 7:00 the joggers from Sausalito started to pass us, waving as they ran on. At the Sausalito side we rested and looked at the city from a different perspective. The sun was coming out and the bridge's lights were turned off. I looked over and saw the campanile at Berkeley. A huge tanker went

under the bridge from the bay side,

Our legs were tired but I looked forward to the trip back.

2. Condition I. Score of 6. Genre: Short Story. Opening: Non-standard good.

It was an early Saturday morning about 1:45 a.m. as loud and terrifighing screams came from my mothers room. She shouted FIRE! FIRE!. I jumped up fast looked out my old and dusty window to see a houge yellow ornge glow raging mad with anger at the house that was next to us. Everybody ran out of the house scream as the dashed across the streets. Terrifighing red flames burst though the top as loud trembuling noise came from the anger. Finaly I herd the sound of a fire engine. Then I saw it comming up the road, then another one came. Then one from Inverness. They all got out, they started spraying the fire with the big an round hoses. One man came running back over to tell the chief that there's a butane tank about ten feet from the fire and if it goes so would a part of are house. The cheif turned and called tow men to rush over and start spraying it. The owners of the place was rushing house to house getting people incase the fire raged out of controll. The firemen finaly stopped the fire 3 1/2 hours later at 5:15 Saturday morning.

3. Condition I. Score of 6. Genre: Letter. Opening: Non-standard good.

Dear George: I'm writing to tell you that I finally got my drivers license.

You should of seen how scared I was, all the way there, I kept thinking, what if I fail.

My whole back was sweaty from sitting in the car, when I got out my shirt stuck to me. We walked into D.M.V. and that's when I really got nervous, my mom went and got in line and I stood behind. The lady in the window said "go around back and get in line with your car." Well I thought she was crazy who's gonna bring there car inside, and put it in line yet! Well after I figured out that she ment around back of the building it made a little more sense. I set there and waited, mom stayed in the D.M.V. and I was all a lone.

When the other cars pulled out I moved to the front of the line. Boy George was I nervous.

Then, this big man with a mustache and a clip board came over to my car. "Turn on the lights please!" he said with a very commander like voice. he opened the passenger door and sat down. "I think he was mad," because all he said, was,

"let's go" when I came to the stop sig.. "left turn" he snorted, by this time I was mad because I couldn't figure out why he had to be so bitchy so I was mad at my self for letting me get subdued by him. So I reached over and turned on the radio, I didn't care what he said it's my car and my radio and he's a passenger so he can do the respecting. So at the next stop sign I jumped back at him by saying, very sternly "which way now!". I think he relized what happened because I got 99% on the test and I didn't even have to park anywhere. he just said "okay, let's go back" a little softer then the first time. See you soon George.

From _____

4. Condition I. Score of 2. No genre rating.

the first time I water skied I was 4 years old. I was in my uncles boat.

5. Condition II. Score of 8. Genre: Letter

Hi Connie

I just received your letter. I see that you are planning to go down south to catch the sun. Here's something else that you could catch while you're down in Long Beach. Surfing. It'd be foolish not to try this great sport when you're going at the right place at the right time.

I know, when watching surfers, it looks scary and dangerous. Board surfing is dangerous. But not body surfing. With body surfing, one does not have to try to catch a huge wave, but just a good wave.

I can still remember the first time I went body surfing. I've swam in the ocean before, so I had no trouble getting into the water. The waves that were breaking near the shore were too small for any kind of surfing, my father told me. The good ones were usually several yards out from the shore. Half the battle of body surfing was fighting through the breaking waves to get the good ones. Catching a good wave was the other half of the battle. That first experience, I had caught about ten waves, either too early or too late. By that time, I was getting discouraged.

Did you ever experience the times when you're discouraged, luck finally comes? That's exactly what happens to me. Just when I was about to go in, I spotted a good size swell riding in. I kept my eyes on it. Then, when the swell was at its peak, and its crest about to break. I started to swim towards shore. At first I felt that I wasn't going anywhere. Suddenly I felt

myself rising, and white rushing foam all around me, carring me to the shore. As I was being carried, I felt an unbelievable sensation. And my heart skipped a beat. I was so happy that I yelled out loud,

Connie, once you catch a wave: you'll feel the same as I did and yell out joyfully.

Hope you have fun!

6. Condition II. Score of 5. Genre: Informal Essay. Opening: Standard good.

First Time I rode a Motorcycle

The very first time I rode a motorcycle was in 5th grade. The motorcycle was a Yamaha Y2 60. I was so scared when my friend Joe told each instruction so carefully I could die. These were his instructions. Pull in the clutch, step down the shift lever and put it into first gear. Then give a little more gas each time you let out the clutch.

I was off, I started up the long and windy hill. I was in first gear still so I tried second it was a success. I got to the top of the windy hill and turned around. As I started down the hill I felt more comfortable with the bike. I shifted into second gear and was off screaming down the hill. The bike I was riding wasn't very fast but for me who was just learning how to ride it was fine. I just got to the bottom of the hill and opened the fense. I got down to my house where Joe was waiting and I tried a skid and crashed. I was so embarresed I could have cryed. THE END.

7. Condition II. Score of 2. Genre: Informal Essay. Opening: Standard good.

Tne first basketball game I played center I was a little nervous. I had playd befor but never as center. I was nervous about how I would do, I knew that if I didn't win the jump at the beging we would have trouble. I won the jump and our team did very good, concidering we never practeced, but their team did a little beter and they won. I was a little disapointed but was in a good mood. I playd the rest of the sesion as a center.

8. Condition III. Score of 8. Genre: Letter

Steve,

We've spoke of plans to go back packing this summer & some how I get the feeling that these plan's are spoken in a misty cloud & that we won't ever do it but hopefully after reading this you will make a special point to get time out for a backing-packing experience.

I'll tell you right now no matter how you schedule your week the first days the hardest, you're still trying to get used to the pack, & the altitude, you probably haven't worn your boots for a while & they'll take some getting used to. By the second day the pack & you should feel comfortable with the trail ahead, now the fun begins.

You can begin to imagine what a trip it is to just be hiking along in this beautiful country side. The air, coming off the hillsides is as crisp & clean as the snow that cools it, everything is just getting over the spring thaw & is shiny & clean & newborn like the faun's, racoons & young birds that you'll encounter in your trip.

I think one of the biggest thrills for me was rock climbing. I found myself rigged up to climb, complete with rope &, hardhat, facing a sheer rock cliff that seemed to reach into the heavens. I started up the face, trying to remember all the fundlementles I had been taught, my knees were shaking & my seemed blank I wanted to quit & go back down. Then I remembered what my guide had told me, "You don't need to know all the fancy techniques, just get your body up that rock any way you can." After about the third step I was moving, I was sure of myself & and the rope. Half way up I stopped for a moment to rest here was where I really tested my mentle strength. Dick, my guide, told me to fall backwards, & if I felt that I couldn't do that I should take off the rope. After what seemed an eternity of confusion I threw my feet out of their holds & let go with my hands. A second & 18 inches later I was on my way back up the rock. When I reached the top I thought I would burst with joy & pride my heart was so full of emotions, relief, happiness, surprise & elation. The climb may have been only ten minutes, but it seemed hours in the making, and I remember it for a life-time.

There are so many other experiences I want to tell you but my time is short, see ya at Christmas.--

9. Condition III. Score of 6. Genre: Letter.

Dear John,

How are you John. I have not written to you for a long time. I thought it might be a good time to write to you. I understand that you are about to go to the DMV office to get your all important driving test. I hope that you pass so I will not have to drive you around no more. I will have the back seat for a chance.

The test is not as hard as every body says there are only forty questions on the written part and if you now your left hand from your right the test is no problem in my opinion the hard part was the driving that guy is always breathing down your neck holding on to his seat for safty. I was lucky enough to pass the test the first time the only thing you have to know is the California handbook from cover to cover. I better get goin' time is running outt and good "luck".

Sincerly

10. Condition III. This paper was scored 3 + 2 = 5, and written to "a friend age: 14 years," although it clearly has been written for a teacher as well.

That one day last year during our school play was so humiliating. The stage was set for a few scenes from Shakespeare's Hamlet and a complete production of A Midsummer's Night Dream. I was the ghost of Hamlet's father. I had my white gown, white face with black eyes and lips and was ready to preform. In the last two days we had preformed for Inverness School and West Marin School and today it was for Tomales Elementry.

At 11:30 all of the actors and actrices walked anxiously to the gym. At 11:45 the play began. The narrators walked onto the stage, gave a short introduction to Hamlet and departed. The scene began with a young guard pacing the stage and was soon startled by the entrance of two fellow guards and friends. They immediately discuss the sighting of the ghost of Hamlet's father. Hearing my cue, I entered on the staircase and swayed and mad my ghostly sounds and disappeared ending the scene. The next scene Hamlet is talking to one of the guards and very dear frineds about his father's ghost. The scene gave me a few minutes to get over a little stagefright. Hamlet exits with what appears a great idea as the scene ends.

This next scene was mine. I enter from the stairs again but come down to the first of the three platforms and talk to my son. I tell him of my brother's betrayal to me so he could marry the queen, my wife, and become King. In the middle of a big paragraph I forgot all of my lines, what I was supposed to do, everything! If not for Hamlet, knealing at my knees I would of

loused up the whole play. He recited my lines to me until I remembered. when I left the stage I ran outside and the drama teacher and director stopped me, told me it was all right and it was good that I dropped my lines in a practice performance than the real thing. This made me feel good and gave me confidence.

11. Condition III. Score of 5. Written for "a friend, age 14." Genre: Informal Essay. The teacher reports that this student is writing above his usual level. Is this because of his so-called audience, or because of his topic?

Killing a Pig

We started off by bringing the pig over from it's stall, tied by one foot and being escorted by my father and brother. Then we (meaning my 6 sisters, 2 brothers, 5 brothers-in-law, 2 sisters-in-law, friends, mom & dad and I) help put the pig on a bench and my father sticks a long but straight edged knife in its heart. The pig then screams, kicks and jerks to get away. Although when it's your first time at it you panic because your affraid that it's going to get away, like I was. My first time, I was shouted at to do this to do that and go get this and go get that. After the pig was opened up, we hung it up by a tractor and into a barn until 3:00 A.M. Then we all get up go down to the barn and start butchering it. The reason for leaving it in the barn is so that the skin is easier to pull off. The fun of killing a pig that I think is getting drunk. We get drunk only because everytime we get cold we drink a half glass of liquor everytime, which for me is every fifteen seconds or less.

12. Condition III. Genre: Short Story. This student did not name his particular "real" audience. But he adopts the tone of a writer swaggering for his peers--appropriately, given the content. A sample paper, this one caused a great debate. Most readers thought it deserved a top score for consistency and appropriateness of voice, humor, and effectiveness as a work of art. The dialect is transcribed well so that it does not seem the work of an illiterate student.

I remember the first time I had to appear before a judge. I was super scared. I was about 11. I had been to other hearing's & stuff like that, & there was a bunch of J.D.'s in the waiting room. Then they called me into the court. my mom was there, but my dad was workin. God he came walking into the place, told everybody to sit down. He looked over my paper's & stuff. He told me to approach the bench, so I did. He sez, "You now what

a lawyer is, I see em on T.V. all the time. He told me to sit down. Then he started talken to my mom, I didn't pay no attention. All right you can go. I about passed out. I was so relieved, but I didn't sweat it. I came out a new man. I was kind of proud. Everybody was lookin when I came out the door. I just grimaced & gave'm a bad ass look.

13. Condition III. Genre: Informal Essay. This paper received a score of 4, but was felt by all readers to be particularly charming. The experience is vivid in spite of difficulties with the written language.

As my dad and I Driving a boat through the channel of Bodega Bay as we were going through the water about 8 knots I started to drift to the portside of the boat and almost hit land luckily we made it out to the outer bay where we seen a bunch of little boats about 19' to 20' in length. As we were dodging in and out of them we felt a rocking motion of the boat, my dad felt something was wrong so when he looked over the starboard side, of the boat he saw 3 whales trying to play with the boat.

14. Condition III. Genre: Informal Essay. This paper received a score of 1 + 1 = 2, primarily because of lack of development compared to other papers. (There were no truly incompetent writers in the group.) As with paper #9, the fact that this was written for a "real audience" had little apparent effect on the writer. This seems a typical response to an assignment--"just the facts." Even so, it is honest, thoughtful, and direct.

The First (and only) Time I Moved

The first time I moved was a few months ago. The hardest part of moving was going to a new school. I did not move very far so I don't miss my friends too much. Going to a new school was hard because every single person was a complete stranger. I started in the middle of the year so it was even harder. Most of the students and most of the teachers seemed really weird, some still do.

Appendix D

Student Paper from Test Occasion Chosen for Presentation at Awards Night

First Time

I nervously climbed into the drivers seat. I was not only wary of driving for the first time but was also feeling rather embarrased that before now I had never driven and I was sure that by the time most people got to drive with the school driving coach they had pretty well all ready learned to drive.

The coach handed me the keys, my gosh, I didn't even know how to start the stupid thing, I didn't ask how, that would have been to degrading; instead I just tried to imatait what I had seen other drivers do. It worked! The car started. I carefully shifted into reverse and then pushed down the accelerator, the car leaped backward, frightened by the quick movement and unexpected touchyness of the car I reacted by stomping on the brake. The car slammed to a stop.

First time, huh? said the coach not even daunted. I was so embarresed at that point that I probably was the colour of a ripe tomatoe. I was suddenly very conscious of my socks, why did I have to wear bright blue sox today? for that matter why had I worn pants that were to short? Why had I come to school?

Very cautiously I again pushed in the accelerator, this time slowly and carefully. The car eased into the lane at a fast 10 mph. I put on the blinker about 100 yards from the turn and slowly turned onto the main road. As I started along a straight streach I began to go faster and even faster until the coach said

"Try to keep it below 60 your first time driving." Oh darn those blue socks. After that straight was a long wide corner and above it in a field a herd of sheep with new born lambs. As I was noticing this the car was noticing I wasn't watching and it tried to drive off the road.

"Do you want to drive or shall I" screached the coach. Darn those short pants, why did I come to school today anyway.

by Robin Kurtz